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SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

John McGuckin

St. Cyril of Alexandria

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

Its History, Theology, and Texts

by

JOHN A. MCGUCKIN

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Ἀφιεροῦται
Εἰς τὴν προσφιλεστάτην σύζυγόν μου
Εἰρήνην

Let us keep the title 'Pharoah', for it conveys well both the power of the bishop of Alexandria and that imperious and vehement character we see in Cyril himself, although all this energy is tempered, one must say, by a christian grandeur of spirit and channelled by a mind of genius. In the history of dogma Cyril's role can only be compared with that of Athanasius, and St. Augustine is the only other figure in the history of theology who is his equal in terms of the authority afforded to his teachings. Standing against Origenism, and against the Antiochenes, he represents a definitive theology, even more so than the Cappadocian Fathers.

—P. Battifol, *La Littérature Grecque*

Let Your Holiness be assured that we follow the opinions of the holy Fathers in all things, especially our blessed and all-renowned Father Athanasius. We refuse to differ from them in any respect. Let no one doubt this.

—Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter to John of Antioch*

It is one and the same Holy Spirit, which the Fathers at Nicaea had within them as they defined the faith, which was in the soul and voice of our most holy and venerable Father the Archbishop Cyril when he dictated this for the correction of the errors that the reverend Nestorius introduced to the church.

—Bishop Hermogenes of Rhinocourouros,
Acclamation at the Council of Ephesus

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PREFACE

In the ten years since I first wrote *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, there has been a considerable renewal of interest in the teachings of this giant of patristic theology. Several closely argued word studies and doctoral dissertations have been added to the ever-accumulating evidence of his masterly command of biblical, christological, soteriological, and sacramental theology. New collections of translated texts have also appeared (Russell, 2000), amplifying those of Wickham (1983), McEnerney (1987), and myself (1994), thus allowing the English-speaking reader to access more of his *opus*.

What had been the constant belief of the Eastern Churches—namely that St. Cyril represented a "seal" over all the other Fathers (that is the *sphragis*, or authoritative stamp that capped them)—has come to be a perspective shared more widely in European theological scholarship, which had unquestionably been hostile to him, both doctrinally and historically, in most commonly available treatments throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I have reflected this extending interest in Cyril's achievements by updating the list of Cyrilline studies in the bibliography.

I am delighted that St. Vladimir's Press is offering a new printing of this book. My work was designed from the outset as a student-friendly introduction to the fascinating events surrounding the Council of Ephesus (431), as well as a serious theological reassessment of Cyrilline theology. Brill of Leiden first produced my text in a very fine cased library edition, but this paperback version suits my initial vision for it as a popular textbook. It was meant to be usable and useful: not a definitive "last word," but more an argument for what patristic theology looked like in full swing, as well as a major gathering of the primary texts to allow readers to research material and form their own opinions. Besides being an introduction to major events in christology and church history of the fifth century, it is (and was by design meant to be) an introduction to the contextual exegesis of patristic writings.

I hope that a new range of readers will be attracted to the story and find this book illuminating—discovering in the process the inner

vitality of Orthodox christology and patristic thought. Theology in the hands of the great masters exceeds a desiccated "quest for accuracies"; it becomes a spiritual quest after the divine truth that liberates and transfigures, and thereby validates its own authenticity. Cyril himself understood this with great clarity, and the issue certainly retains its importance in the contemporary scholarly environment.

Fr. John A. McGuckin
January 2004, New York
Feast of Saints Athanasius
and Cyril of Alexandria

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Analecta Bollandiana.
ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin, Leipzig, 1927f.
BiNJ	Bijdragen van de Philosophische en Theologische Faculteiten der NederlandscheJezuiten. Roermond & Maastricht. 1938f.
BLE	Bulletin de Littérature Écclesiastique. Toulouse.
CHR	The Catholic Historical Review, Washington, 1915f.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Paris, Louvain.
DCB	Dictionary of Christian Biography, London, 1877.
DHGE	Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Écclesiastique. Paris 1912f.
Dom Stud.	Dominican Studies. Oxford.
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers. Cambridge, Mass.
DTC	Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique. Paris 1909f.
EE	Estudios Ecclesiasticos. Madrid. 1922f.
EO	Echos D'Orient. Paris, 1897–1942.
E Ph	Ekklesiastikos Pharos. Alexandria.
Eph Th Louv.	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis. Louvain.
E.T.	English Translation.
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review. Brookline, Mass.
HCO	Histoire des Conciles Oecuméniques. Ed. G. Dumerque. Paris.
Hefele.	CJ. Hefele (with annotations by Dom. Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles, Vol.2. pt.1. (Council of Ephesus), Paris, 1908.
ITQ	Irish Theological Quarterly, Maynooth.
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Cambridge.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies. Oxford.
Kopt. Akt.	Koptische Akten zum ephesinischen Konzil vom Jahre 431. Transl. W. Kraatz. TU 26.2.

LXX	Septuagintal version. (LXX after a biblical reference does not signify Cyril's use of the Septuagint, which is his habitual text, rather those instances where the LXX version departs substantively from the Masoretic text of the OT).
MSR	Mélanges de Science Religieuse. Lille.
MTZ	Munchener Theologische Zeitschrift. Munich.
MUS	Le Muséon. Louvain.
NRT	Nouvelle Revue Théologique. Tournai.
OC	Orientalia Christiana. Rome.
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta. Rome.
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Rome.
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts.
Or Chr.	Oriens Christianus. Leipzig 1901–1941, Wiesbaden 1953f.
PBR	Patristic and Byzantine Review. New York.
PL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Ed. J.P. Migne, Series Latina, Paris, 1844–1855.
PG	Ibid. Series Graeca, Paris 1857–1866.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis.
RAC	Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum.
REB	Revue des Études Byzantines. Paris.
RES	Revista Espanola de Teologia. Madrid 1941f.
Rev Et Aug.	Revue des Études Augustiniennes. Paris.
Rev SR	Revue des Sciences Religieuses. Strasbourg, Paris.
Rev Thom.	Revue Thomiste. Paris.
RHE	Revue d'Histoire Écclesiastique.
RIT	Revue Internationale de Théologie.
ROC	Revue de L'Orient Chrétien. Paris.
RSPT	Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques. Paris.
RSR	Recherches de Science Religieuse. Paris.
SC	Sources Chrétiennes. Paris.
SCA	Studies in Christian Antiquity. Washington,1941f.
SCH	Studies in Church History. Cambridge.
Schol.	Scholastik. Freiburg.
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology.
ST	Studi e Testi. Rome.
StC	Studia Catholica. Roermond & Nijmegen, 1924f.
Stud. Pat.	Studia Patristica. (TU 63–64,78–81, Berlin, 1957–62) & Oxford 1987f. (Proceedings of the Oxford Internat. Conferences on Patristic Studies, 1987f).
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur. Leipzig, Berlin, Oxford.
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte. Gotha-Stuttgart.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der alteren Kirche, Berlin.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTEXT OF THE EPHESUS CRISIS

1. The Early Life and Writings of Cyril, 378–428

Cyril of Alexandria was not only one of the finest christian theologians of his day, he also stands out in the ranks of the greatest patristic writers of all generations as perhaps the most powerful exponent of christology the church has known and, after Athanasius, the writer who has had the greatest historical influence on the articulation of this most central and seminal aspect of christian doctrine. When one adds to this the political aspects of his life, the fact that he occupied the throne of one of the most important sees of the Byzantine Oecumene and was, by virtue of that office, in the select ranks of the most powerful men in the world of his time, then the extraordinary range of his life and work stands out all the more vividly and in relief. Cyril is, without doubt, a profound and controversial figure.

For the Eastern church he is the father of Orthodox christology par excellence; a great exegete as well as a spiritual guide, a saint in the full range of his doctrine and his life's energy and focus, the two aspects being inseparable in the Orthodox understanding of the nature of theology and sanctity. Much modern work on christology and church history is, however, loud in his criticism, yet frequently that criticism only lightly masks the theological contentions from which it springs. Much the same can be observed even in his own lifetime. He was regarded by some of his episcopal colleagues, though a minority it must be added, as a great heretical manipulator of the church. By most others he was regarded as the greatest theologian living, and by many as a living saint and defender of the truth in a time of crisis in the manner of a new Athanasius or Gregory Nazianzen. He was capable, both in terms of his political manoeuvres as well as his theology, of stirring up violent feelings for and against him, wherever he went. In itself this is a testimony to the extraordinary vigour of his mind and his character. Small men do not create such large effects. No less than his enemies admitted that his intellectual work could not be disregarded, and even bitter opponents such as Theodoret of

Cyr came in the end to adopt much of the argument for which Cyril had been pressing, even expressing it in Cyrilline terms which they had earlier denounced.[1] Because of this, since he represents the central Eastern tradition of christological sprituality, and because he is a conciliar symbol, like Athanasius, over whom theological and historical disagreement endures in modern thinking, then his life and doctrine have a canonical and contemporary relevance of no small proportions.

The records of the great christological controversy, in which Cyril was a leading protagonist after 429, and the voluminous correspondence it stimulated, have left the historian with an abundance of detailed sources for the reconstruction of Cyril's activities after this date. His earlier life is less well documented, indeed the dates only tend to become clear after 403.

According to the 7th century Coptic bishop and historian John of Nikiu[2] Cyril was born in the obscure Egyptian town of Theodosios close to, if not identical with, the present village of Mahalla el Kobra.[3] Later tradition, especially in Greek sources, has tended to locate his birth in Alexandria, which of course is the locus around which all the important aspects of his life certainly revolved. We could posit a date for his birth some time near 378. His mother seems to have originated from Memphis, and in her younger years spent some time as a refugee in a monastic house in Alexandria, moving about 120 kms. from the capital in order to be married. Her elder brother, Cyril's uncle the priest Theophilus, remained in the city, eventually becoming one its most powerful bishops in 385, when Cyril was about seven or eight years of age. Cyril's mother evidently kept in close contact with her brother after his ecclesiastical advancement[4] and it cannot be doubted that Theophilus would have guided his nephew's education and advanced his ecclesiastical career from the outset.

Cyril's mature writings show quite clearly the depth and rigour of his educational training, and bear clear witness to its christian

[1] In his later writing, especially the Eranistes, Theodoret applied the Cyrilline usage of 'hypostatic christology' for which in his earlier writings he had loudly criticised Cyril. cf. Richard (1936).

[2] The Chronicle of John of Nikiu; Ed. & tr.(from the Coptic) by Zotenberg, Paris, 1883; E.T. R.H. Charles, The Chronicle of John Bishop of Nikiu, London, 1916. q.v. p. 76.

[3] cf. Munier (1947).

[4] In a hostile account in his Life of Chrysostom, the historian Palladius says that Theophilus arranged for her to give false witness against a certain priest he wanted to depose.

inspiration. He was evidently schooled in rhetoric, but the substance of his learning is built upon the twin pillars of biblical theology and the prior patristic tradition, mainly the writers of the Alexandrian church. R.M. Grant has demonstrated that when he criticised pagan culture in his Contra Julianum, a work of his last years, he gained his knowledge for most of his learned allusions to pagan literature, by following up the references suggested in the writings of previous christian apologists, particularly Eusebius of Caesarea.[5]

Chief among his sources is Athanasius the Great, but he is also aware of the exegetical work of Origen, Didymus, and even Chrysostom, whom on occasion he paraphrases extensively.[6] He also knows some of Jerome's exegetical writing,[7] who for a time had allied himself with Theophilus in the early attack on Origenism the archbishop conducted in the Egyptian monasteries. The exact relationship Cyril had with Isidore of Pelusium, eighteen years his senior and a notable leader in the monastic circles of Egypt, is one that still needs clarification. Isidore wrote to Cyril with great frankness, and although his letters are frequently critical, there is no sign that they were resented, even though Isidore was a provincial cleric within Cyril's jurisdiction. Isidore enjoyed a freedom of speech with the archbishop that apparently belonged to a trusted counsellor and perhaps mentor from his past. Among Isidore's 'letters to Cyril'[8] there is a complaint that Cyril is a little too fond of worldly interests when he should be busying himself with the pursuits of solitude. Some have taken this to suggest that Cyril was himself a monk, perhaps for something like five years in the desert at Nitria, but if this was the case it is surprising that he himself does not make any reference to it despite numerous communications with the Egyptian monks when he subsequently became archbishop of Alexandria. Severus of Antioch, one of the great Cyrilline disciples of the 6th century knew this tradition but was doubtful of it.[9] It seems to have been sustained largely through the later work

[5] see Grant (1964) and Malley (1978).

[6] McGuckin (1987).

[7] Abel (1941); Kerrigan (1952). Wickham (1983, xvi, fn.15) notes that he probably knew Jerome by means of the Greek translation made by Sophronius. Several parallels can be explained by mutual dependence on Origen who was a massive source (frequently undisclosed) for Jerome too.

[8] Not all Isidore's 'letters to Cyril' ought to be presumed, however, to be addressed to the patriarch Cyril. See: PG 78.361; 78.369; 78.373; 78.392.

[9] CSCO 101, p. 252f.

of Ibn Al Muqaffa[10] but he goes on to say that Cyril's monastic father was not Isidore of Pelusium, but Serapion the Wise. Wickham has drawn attention to the dubious reliability of this late source.[11] Perhaps we may safely surmise that Theophilus patronised his nephew's preparation for an ecclesiastical career, and that this would have included the solid basis of a formal education in Alexandria as well as long term christian studies which would not rule out periods of staying in the monasteries, which then, as now, were the bastions of Egyptian christianity.

Cyril's written style has an abundance of rare forms and stylisations which are typically Alexandrian. Nestorius criticised him for being stuffy and difficult to read, but that was a classic example of the pot calling the kettle black. Cyril's Greek is certainly dense and difficult, but the difficulty is as often related to the subtlety and compactness of his thought as it is to the heavy loads he frequently places on his syntax, and his preference for Atticising forms.

Cyril is unusual among the Greek Fathers for having even a little knowledge of the Latin tradition, and if he was not bi-lingual himself he certainly saw to it, as a scholarly archbishop, that the important materials he sent for Pope Celestine's perusal at Rome were quickly and accurately translated into Latin before they left Alexandria. When he assembled lists of patristic Testimonia before and after the council of Ephesus he was able to cite Cyprian and Ambrose as authorities.

His period of formal education, following Abel,[12] would probably have covered grammatical studies between 390 and 392 at the usual ages of 12–14, followed by Rhetoric and Humanities between the ages of 15 and 20, in the period 393–397. After this we should locate a specific time of christian theological and biblical studies beginning probably in 398 (the year that the great Alexandrian theologian and exegete Didymus the Blind died) and ending sometime around 402. Already from this period, when Cyril was in his early twenties, begins his familiarity with the scriptural text that bore fruit in his monumental works of exegesis. Today Cyril is largely regarded as a major theologian of the Person of Christ because of his involvement in the Nestorian crisis. In his own time, however, he probably thought that it would be his great biblical commentaries that would earn him his immortality

[10] History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria. Ed. & Tr. by B. Evetts, Patrologia Orientalis. 1.427f.
[11] Wickham (1983) pp. xi–xii, fn. 3.
[12] Abel (1947) p. 230.

as a christian thinker. Most of these works of commentary are produced in this early period, before the christological controversy diverted his energies to other pressing matters.

At the end of his years of study, in 403, when he was about 25 years of age, Cyril was ordained Lector of the church of Alexandria by Theophilus, and he began his ecclesiastical career at his uncle's side. We may presume that in the years following he advanced to higher clerical offices, but from this time onwards he was intimately attached to the chancery of the Alexandrian church. By the time of the Nestorian crisis, when Nestorius himself had been occupying the throne of the imperial city for merely a year, Cyril was already endowed with twenty five years' experience of church politics at the highest level. The difference in political acumen between the two men is obvious from the outset.

In that same year of 403 Cyril attended his uncle at the Synod of the Oak in Constantinople, which deposed John Chrysostom an event which Cyril recalls in a later letter to the aged Acacius of Beroea who was also present and survived long enough to become an important broker in the delicate negotiations that were conducted after the council of Ephesus.[13] Having been involved in this trial of the great Chrysostom, Cyril stood firm with his uncle in the opinion that John had been rightly deposed, even to the extent of allowing the issue to cause a cloud to descend on relations between the Alexandrian church and Rome, which demanded John's rehabilitation. Relations between Rome and Alexandria remained poor until the early years of Cyril's administration.

When Atticus, John's second successor in the see of Constantinople, wrote to inform Cyril of the decision to restore John's name in the liturgical commemorations (the diptychs) of the churches at Constantinople and Antioch he received, as first response, a rebuff from Alexandria.[14] John's eventual rehabilitation (traceable at Egypt from about 417) seems to have been a gradual and a diplomatic one as Cyril moved from the policy of Theophilus to his own understanding of present ecclesiastical exigencies. In the time of the Nestorian controversy he wrote to the imperial court signalling his partial acceptance of the policy to restore John's memory, by contrasting Nestorius' unorthodoxy with John's purity of doctrine. This was a subtle manoeuvre on Cyril's

[13] Cyril, Ep. 33. PG.77.159; ACO 1.1.7.p.148. See the translations following.
[14] Cyril, Ep.76. PG.77.351–360.

part in so far as John's deposition had been secured by Theophilus at the Synod of the Oak on disciplinary, not theological, grounds. But even in 432, in his letter to Acacius of Beroea, Cyril has no qualms about standing up for the legitimacy of John's deposition.

It is not necessary to presume that Cyril ever actually restored John's name to the diptychs of the church of Alexandria either in 417 or at any later date. There was no standard practice at that period which would require him to do so. It was enough, to regain communion with the Roman see and to find favour with the royal court, to signal his tacit assent to the policy. Cyril's willingness to use John's works, and speak of him as a standard of orthodoxy, suggests that he progressively abandoned the previous public policy of his church in a slow process of readjustment, in which he was ever careful not to lose face.The truth of the matter, in terms of John's rehabilitation in the eyes of Cyril and the Alexandrians, probably lies somewhere between John of Nikiu's eager statement that Cyril was 'filled with great joy' at the prospect of restoring John's honour 'because he loved and honoured him as a great teacher'[15] and the caustic comment of the deposed Nestorius who listed the Constantinopolitan hierarchs whom he accused the Alexandrians of destroying and then said to Cyril: 'I will pass over John in silence, whose relics you have now come to venerate, however unwillingly.'[16]

In his period assisting Theophilus, Cyril saw at close hand how powerful the office of archbishop could be in the hands of a determined man. The Byzantine administration was clearly not looking for the family tradition to continue, given the controversies that had never seemed to be absent in Theophilus' days. When Theophilus died on Tuesday October 15th, 412, they had already made moves to secure the election of the incumbent archdeacon Timothy. Theophilus still had numerous followers, however, and Cyril's support was buoyant. It was evident that the nephew had been groomed for office and in his nine years of service he had already secured his position in the church on his own merits. The two factions in the Alexandrian church immediately clashed, causing no small political and civil disturbance which the contemporary historian Socrates records.[17] It is indicative of the extent of Cyril's ecclesiastical and popular support

[15] Charles (1916) pp. 95–96.
[16] Loofs, Nestoriana (1905) p. 300.
[17] Socrates Hist.Eccl. 7.7. ET. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Oxford, 1891.

at this period that despite the direct opposition of Abundantius, the Byzantine commander of the Egyptian garrisons, who sided with Timothy's faction, it was Cyril who was consecrated archbishop on the Friday of the same week, October 18th 412. He was about 34 years of age and his episcopal career was born among the kind of riot which showed all too clearly how volatile were the city and church politics of Alexandria.

Socrates paints a turbulent picture of Cyril's early administration, recounting his confiscation and seizure of the Novatianist churches in the city, progressive friction with the Urban Prefect Orestes, and mob violence involving attacks on Jewish elements, as well as the infamous assassination of the pagan philosopher Hypatia by a Christian mob in 415. Socrates telescopes the issues together in what becomes generally a gloomy picture, but his account is far from unbiased. He has two axes to grind against Cyril, for he is himself both a Novatianist sympathiser, and a Constantinopolitan in outlook. Both attitudes prejudice him somewhat in his assessment of Cyril's actions.

The position of the Archbishop of Alexandria had consolidated from the time of Athanasius, when even then it was considerable enough for the imperial court to have good reason to respect it, and in the hands of Theophilus and Cyril it was to reach the zenith of its influence. The leader of the church there was one of the chief powers of Byzantine Egypt, rivalling the importance of the city Prefect, with access to a large, vociferous, and mobile source of support in the form of the monks, as well as a standing bodyguard of Parabalani[18] of considerable size. Socrates[19] says that 'Cyril came into possession of the episcopate with greater power than Theophilus had ever exercised. For from that time the bishopric of Alexandria went beyond the limits of its sacerdotal functions and assumed the administration of secular matters.' This seems to have in mind particularly Cyril's legal moves against the Jews and Novatianists.

Cyril's early actions as archbishop reveal him as a reformer, trying to bring order into the ecclesiastical administration, but not entirely able to control the popular forces on which his power base depended. His early actions attempted to repress the vestiges of the heretical

[18] Originally able-bodied men who attended and ministered to the sick in a form of early Christian 'guild'. They came to be a force of attendants at the service, and under the direction, of the Archbishop. cf. W. Schubart. Parabalani. Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, 40, 1954, 97–101; Philipsborn (1950).
[19] Hist. Eccl. 7.7; 7.13.

groups in the city, in line with imperial religious policy of the period as supervised by the Augusta Pulcheria, Theodosius The Younger's elder sister. Cyril's writings that predate 429 are full of references to the continuing fight against heresy, but those he turns his attention to are the famous and classic varieties—Sabellians, Arians, Manicheans, and Adoptionists. Until the Nestorian controversy he never refers, for example, to the Pelagians or the Apollinarists.[20]

One of his first acts in this campaign against dissidents was to move by law against the Novatianist sect, to dispossess their church and their bishop Theopemptus. In this policy he was responding to the current political climate. From Theodosius the Great (346–395) onwards, Roman legislation had increasingly disabled heretical meetings, threatening confiscation of goods. Cyril's application of the law signalled a renewal of the campaign, just as Nestorius received the same commission at Constantinople on his appointment there. The law penalising heretical meetings was explicitly reaffirmed in May 428.[21]

The Novatianists, however, despite Socrates' propulsion of them to centre stage, were already a thing of the past. After his suppression of their church Cyril turned to face the two real ideological and political opponents of the christian church in Alexandria, that is the common people who still actively maintained the 'old religion' of the pagan cults (especially strong in the rural regions), and the Jews, whose presence in Alexandria for centuries had made the city a veritable centre of Jewish learning as well as commerce.

The modern contexts of toleration and religious pluralism may well generate a very negative view of the repressive measures Cyril can be seen to have taken against his opponents, and this applies both to those outside the church as well as to his christian antagonists of later years. It is necessary, however, to locate this activity of Cyril's in its ancient context rather than in any modern perspective, and in this regard two background considerations are important.

In the first place the early church instinctively shared the exclusivity of Judaism. No common agreement or toleration was felt to be possible for moral or religious pluralism. By the fifth century Paganism and Judaism were perceived as the contrary enemies of the christian religious system—a view which is exactly parallel, of course, to Judaism's own view of both christianity and paganism. The monks of Egypt in this

[20] cf. Durand (1964) p. 15.
[21] Codex Theodosianum 16.5.165.

period are frequently found destroying the ancient pagan shrines and idols, at least wherever they could get away with it, where local pagan opposition was ineffective. This is desecration of the holy places of other religions, or active evangelisation depending on the viewpoint of the modern beholder, but for the christians of Cyril's age the destruction of pagan shrines, to take an extreme physical encapsulation of the wider movement of the fifth century christian predominance over paganism, was not only an important element in evangelisation, it was seen as the purification of a nesting-place of demonic forces in that area. The early church did not regard the pagan temples as barren conventicles of false superstition, rather as the active centres of demonic enmity and malice to local christians. Cyril's instinctive beliefs in this regard can be seen in the illuminating episode of his translation of the relics of Alexandrian martyr saints to the Isis cult centre at Menouthis, an event which shall be noticed later.

Secondly, in terms of the clash with Judaism, the implacable opposition between the two religions was the result of two large political and corporate bodies of a mixed population in Alexandria, who by race and religion would not be assimilated to each other. The opposition was focused by religion but flowed out in all other areas of life, and was an indication of the great power that both religious systems could hold over their respective peoples. Like the Jews, the christians' religion constituted them as a 'Genos', a particular people, and in the Theodosian renewal that race of the Greeks (the christians) was felt to have come into its full inheritance of the earth.

Liberal ecumenism, even in the contemporary world, is taken aback when it finds its principles of toleration and accommodation wholly ineffective in the face of such powerful religio-political currents and, in consequence, may judge Cyril harshly for his attitudes, but the contexts and agendas of liberal ecumenism do not accurately convey the realities of fifth century Alexandria. It is a matter of some debate whether, in the face of innumerable examples ranging from Israel to Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Russia, Cambodia, (the list is endless) whether those contexts can even be said accurately to describe the realities of religion and politics in the late twentieth century either.

The church in Cyril's day had already sensed its victory over paganism. For over a century, since the time of Theodosius I, the christian religion had been enshrined as the imperial religion of the Romans. It had an energy and political environment that empowered

its sense of mission and establishment. Paganism still lingered on, sometimes as a vital force, in the hearts and affections of the simple country people, and pagan philosophy was still an important intellectual critic of Christianity, as evidenced by the scholarly elite of the city. Nonetheless the church sensed that the tide had already turned against the old religion, even in its heartlands of Rome, Asia Minor and Egypt. The edict of Honorius and Theodosius II suppressing pagans and heretics, dated to 407, captures the mood of the time, and in its final prescriptions also explains Theophilus', and Cyril's, legal base of operations in their assaults on paganism.[22]

That the tide had turned against them could not be said, however, of Judaism. Despite the innumerable hardships and political disasters that had befallen the Jewish nation, the Alexandrian community of Jews was still immensely vigorous in the fifth century. Theologically, morally, and in terms of communal cohesion, the church found in the synagogue its most serious opponent. The conflict between the two peoples was perhaps more acute at Alexandria than anywhere else in the Late Antique Roman world, given the great size and importance of the respective communities of that city. At that time Alexandria was still the veritable capital of world Judaism.

The early Paschal Homilies of Cyril demonstrate his concern over the assimilation of christians to Jewish customs, a problem that can be found in patristic apologetic two hundred years previously.[23] In Cyril's time relationships between the christian and Jewish inhabitants were full of friction, and that friction in the volatile city environment was able soon enough to ignite dangerous fires of longstanding differences. The first three political crises which embroil Cyril as a young bishop typify his problems; the first was a major incident with the Jewish community, the second a clash with the Urban Prefect, the third a murder scandal involving the pagan intelligentsia.

It was a longstanding custom for the congregation to applaud in church, or to shout out signs of their disapproval, when bishops preached to them. There are several indications in the fifth century patristic homilies of the bishops sometimes struggling for control over their audience. In the Alexandrian cathedral one of Cyril's avid followers,

[22] 'Pagan altars in all places should be destroyed and all temples on our (imperial) estates should be transferred to suitable uses.....to bishops of the local regions we grant the faculty of ecclesiastical power to prohibit the said practices.' Codex Theodosianum 16.10.19.

[23] cf. McGuckin (1992); Ibid. (1985); Wilken (1971).

the lay professor Hierax, had the function of leading the applause during Cyril's sermons. Hierax was a well-known figure; a prominent christian, and a highly visible member of Cyril's entourage.

Shortly after Cyril's consecration as archbishop the Urban Prefect Orestes was delivering a series of official edicts in the Alexandrian Theatre, primarily addressed to the Jewish community, and regulating entertainments that could be held on their sabbath day. A group of Cyril's supporters, including Hierax, turned up for the occasion to find out what was being allowed or prohibited, and their presence so inflamed the crowd that they beat up the unfortunate man, whom they recognised immediately, and denounced him to Orestes as a spy of Cyril's. The Prefect arrested him and used him to demonstrate his malice towards the archbishop by having him questioned in prison under torture. Socrates says that: 'Orestes had long regarded with jealousy the growing power of the bishops because they encroached on the jurisdiction of the authorities appointed by the Emperor.'[24] Cyril responded to this by sending the Jewish authorities a formal warning not to engage in further molestation of christians. He did so secure in his own mind that he had the tendency of the law behind him, which under Theodosius II had increasingly enacted measures disabling Jewish rights.[25]

Hard on the heels of this episode a local riot in one of the city quarters where relations between Jews and christians had reached breaking point, led to a major incident. A Jewish group living beside the 'church of Alexander' sent runners through the streets late one night crying out that there had been a fire in the church building. This brought local christians in numbers to the site where they were set upon in pre-arranged attacks, adding to the confusion, and some were killed.[26] The incident could not be contained and may have been interpreted as the beginning of a dangerous concerted movement. Whatever the case there was a mass gathering of christians at the cathedral the following morning demanding redress, and under Cyril's leadership, acting as judicial magistrate and ethnic Archon, this moved

[24] Hist. Eccl.7.13.

[25] e.g the punishment of Jewish proselytizers of Christians in 415 (Cod. Theod. 16.8.22) which involved even the degradation of the Jewish patriarch Gamaliel. There were also edicts in 409, 412, 415 417 & 423. The last edict was designed to prohibit any 'future burning of synagogues' yet it does so almost as a concession to "the wretched requests" of the Jewish communities.

[26] Socrates. Hist. Eccl. 7.13

as a column to the synagogues of the chief suspects. The crowd seized the buildings and devastated them, with the action soon degenerating into widespread looting.

Socrates, in this connection, speaks of Cyril instigating a mass expulsion of Jews from the city, but this is surely an exaggeration. Cyril's administration certainly marks a stage in the increasing christian domination of fifth century Alexandria but the Jewish presence there would remain strong and influential for a long time to come. The expulsions of Jews he instigated should rather be seen as particularised and related to the incident of the Alexander church murders; an aspect of Cyril's claims to exercise independent judicial power in matters relating to religion, in the face of Orestes' civil jurisdiction. Far from being the whole Jewish population the exiles probably constituted the group around the Alexander church. It was, nonetheless, a strong signal to the Jewish population as a whole.

The bad relations between Cyril and Orestes degenerated further when a large group of monks from Nitria came to the city 'to fight on Cyril's behalf'.[27] They came up to Orestes in his chariot and surrounded the vehicle, jostling it, and denouncing the Augustal Prefect as a pagan, presumably because his enmity of the archbishop was public knowledge by this time, and because his social contacts included notable pagan litterateurs and philosophers. His answer to them was that he was indeed a christian, but one (he was glad to say) that had been baptized by the archbishop of Constantinople. In his answer he not only distanced himself from Cyril, but also gives an indication of an important factor in the subsequent controversy with Nestorius, and that is the innate rivalry that existed between the two christian cities.

Alexandria looked back to its ancient pedigree as a rich source of patriarchs and martyrs. Constantinople regarded itself as the epitome of christian civilisation and culture, and particularly disdained the Egyptian provincials. Mockery of the Alexandrian accent was a longstanding joke in Byzantium. Orestes' evident outrage and disdain for the monks inflamed matters further and stones began to fly, one of which hit the Prefect on the head, drawing blood. Most of the attendant troops, according to Socrates, 'plunged into the crowd to escape' but local citizens felt that the monks had gone too far and intervened to break up the fracas. The monk who threw the stone, by name of Ammonius, was arrested and brutally tortured by Orestes,

[27] Socrates. Hist. Eccl.7.14.

doubtless in an attempt to uncover a link with Cyril and provide an excuse for his arraignment. Ammonius died from injuries sustained while in Orestes' custody, and in reply Cyril pointedly gave the unfortunate man a triumphant funeral, even speaking of him as a new martyr for the faith. Harassment of paganism by the monks, even to the extent of physically demolishing the shrines was by then an established custom of the Alexandrian church, and Cyril's eulogising remarks on Ammonius can possibly be contextualised in this light. In other words, Cyril did not disabuse his monastic supporters as to Orestes' supposedly pagan inclinations and sustained the notion that the monk had died at the hands of infidel torturers on account of his protests against idolatry.

The particularly pugnacious nature of the monks' attack on paganism was a notable factor in Egypt, but the repressive policy in general is not a peculiarity of Cyril's. It was, in the main, a shared perspective of several christian hierarchs of the time. Theodoret, in his history, makes a special point of commending Theophilus[28] for his root and branch extirpation of pagan cults in Alexandria, citing with evident approval and admiration the famous attack on the Serapeum in Alexandria when the monks sawed up the cult statue of the god. Such a frontal and public assault on the main centre of pagan civic and religious life speaks volumes about the power of the archbishop of Alexandria in the early fifth century, and Cyril, in this episode of Ammonius' funeral, is clearly warning off the civil Byzantine power from an encroachment onto that area of public influence his see had already established.

The third notable episode of this early period of Cyril's administration is perhaps the most infamous—the murder of the pagan Neo-Platonic philosopher Hypatia by a christian mob. At the time, as indeed they have since, his enemies tried to lay responsibilty for this personally at Cyril's door. This crime was committed shortly after the clash with Orestes when a crowd, possibly composed of many of Cyril's parabalani since they were led by someone who held the office of lector in the church, met with Hypatia's carriage in the city streets. She was the leading light of the city's philosophical schools, an eminent teacher and a social figure who counted in the ranks of her most ardent disciples the philosopher Synesius, whom Theophilus had subsequently consecrated as bishop of Ptolemais in 410. As far as the mob were concerned

[28] Hist. Eccl.5.22.

this cultured woman represented a focus of unyielding opposition to Christianity. They appear to have connected her in some way with Orestes' continuing hatred of their archbishop Cyril, and when they stopped her carriage they dragged her from it and pulled her into the Great Church, formerly the Caesareum, of Alexandria.

This incident occurred during Lent, in March 415, the time of the preparation of catechumens. Was it an attempt to force her to acknowledge the Gospel? The mob stripped her in the church before stoning her to death with tiles. Perhaps it was a grim parody of the baptismal rite which degenerated into a frenzy of hate and destruction that resulted in the literal tearing apart of her body and the burning of the sections of her corpse.[29] Whatever light one puts upon the crime the fact was that here was a grotesque murder within the very church building, and it was a scandal that reverberated round all parts of the city, Jewish, pagan, and christian factions alike, and even further afield. Socrates says that this event, 'brought no small reproach on Cyril and the church of the Alexandrians'.[30] Some, most famously Gibbon who calls the murder 'an exploit of Cyril's,' blatantly misinterpret this remark when they consider the murder as an act in which he was personally involved. Socrates' point is that the behaviour of this mob at their own church spread disgrace upon the whole christian community, including its archbishop, and called out for closer control of the volatile popular factions in Alexandria.

The pagan philosopher Damascius also recounted the incident specifically attributing personal blame and complicity to Cyril, but he was writing 130 years after the events, and his whole account is evidently prejudiced from the start and suffused with a bitter hatred of the way in which Christianity had suppressed his profession and way of life. Following Gibbon, Charles Kingsley, with more regard for romance than fact in his novel 'Hypatia', lost no opportunity to paint Cyril as the evil villain of the piece, and the mythic caricature he provided became fashionable. More recently, Wickham is more just to Cyril, and certainly on the grounds of deeper scholarly judgement, when he summarises the early crises of his administration as follows: 'The facts are not to be denied. The picture they yield is not one of a fanatical priest, hungry for power, heading a howling

[29] cf. F. Schaefer. 'Cyril of Alexandria and the Murder of Hypatia.' Catholic University Bulletin, 8, (Washington) 1902, 441–453.
[30] Hist. Eccl. 7.15.

mob, but of an untried leader attempting, and initially failing, to master popular forces'.[31]

As a result of the violence the Urban Prefect denounced Cyril to the imperial court at Byzantium. Theodosius II was only fourteen years of age at the time, and already under the sway of his dominant sister Pulcheria, the regent Augusta from 414. Cyril wrote to justify his actions in expelling the Jews, and claimed that he was defending christian interests in the city in the face of concerted attacks. If Orestes was hoping to have the archbishop deposed his plans did not come to fruition. There was one concrete result, however, which demonstrates a degree of official disapproval of Cyril's political role, and that was the initiation by Pulcheria of a formal commission of enquiry.

In 416 Aedesius the imperial commissioner who had been sent from Constantinople concluded that the guild of parabalani was a threat to public order, and in September of that year their numbers were restricted by imperial edict to less than 500, and they were brought under the legal inspection of Orestes as the city Prefect. The decree seemed to have reined in Cyril's growing influence: 'It pleases our Clemency that clerics should have nothing in common with public affairs or matters pertaining to a municipal Senate'.[32] And yet, within two years of this decree Cyril's reputation had risen so high at court that the law was again altered in his favour. On February 3rd 418[33] the number of the parabalani was increased to 600, and once more they were placed under Cyril's jurisdiction: 'to obey the most reverend bishop's orders and directions.' It is a remarkable witness to Cyril's ability to spring back from adversity, something that characterises all his life's story, but also to his capacity to command considerable influence at the imperial court, frequently far more than even provincial governors could summon up.

Cyril's literary work[34] before the Nestorian controversy is largely concerned with books of exegesis. If they had not been subsequently overshadowed by his own brilliant apologetic works of christology, the Commentaries on the Old Testament which he produced could well have come to be regarded as his crowning glories. He composed at this period his Thesaurus, which is largely a digest of St. Athanasius'

[31] Wickham. (1983.) p. xvi.
[32] Cod. Theod.16.2.42.
[33] Cod. Theod. 16.2.43.
[34] For a fuller listing, chronological location, and brief outline of the contents of Cyril's works see J. Quasten, (1975), 119–135.

Discourses Against the Arians, his Commentary on St. John's Gospel, and the Dialogues On The Trinity. Even in the midst of pressing concerns he never allowed his scholarly work to falter. It was a workload that prepared him for the controversies to come, when in the years after 429 he was able to produce a phenomenal outpouring of writing at a rate his opponents could not match.

The external problems that faced him as a christian theologian at this period are largely provided by the continuing intellectual opposition of Judaism, and the more practical opposition of popular pagan religion. One other episode of Cyril's activity relating to this latter aspect of life in fifth century Egypt is known to us and can probably be located in this earlier period, indeed as perhaps the last known incident before he became embroiled in the Nestorian issue. It consists in his formal translation of the relics of the martyr saints Cyrus and John[35] from Alexandria to Menouthis in an attempt to suppress the cult of Isis which was still flourishing there to the detriment of the church.[36]

The episode is preserved for us by Sophronius[37] who has also retained fragments of Cyril's festal homilies given on the same occasion.[38] The translation of the relics shows, in miniature, the great attractive power of popular religion, the old Egyptian cults, and Cyril's christian policy which meets the old ways head on providing a new set of focal holy places and rites to draw away and redirect popular allegiance.

Along the eastern littoral from Alexandria was the town of Menouthis. The christian community was represented there by the small church of the holy evangelists built in Theophilus' day, but the religious centre of the town's life, and to which it attracted a wide traffic, was the great shrine of Isis. After Theophilus' successful policy of destroying the pagan temples in Alexandria, the countryside continued much longer, with more successful resistance, in its accustomed ways. The Isis cult, with its great statue of the goddess, flourished at Menouthis and oracles were still given there. It had also become a healing centre, replacing the functions of the destroyed Serapeum, and thus a

[35] The 'Holy Unmercenaries'.

[36] A fuller discussion of the events is given in my paper: 'The Influence of the Isis cult on St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology.' Studia Patristica, 24, Leuven, 1992, 191–199. Here the christological implications of Cyril's actions are highlighted as a most consistent encapsulation of interests which he sustained throughout all his christological thought.

[37] Laudes in Ss. Cyrum et Joannem. PG.87.3380–3424 (q.v. 3412f).

[38] Homiliae Diversae.18. PG.77.1100–1106.

pilgrimage locus. The temple priests served the petitioners with some medical benefits for which offerings were made, and there seems to have been some form of incubation ritual in the temple precincts whereby sufferers would sleep in the shrine overnight and receive healings in dream-intimations, as at Aesculapean shrines.

Sophronius describes the cult in a way that gives the instinctive christian understanding of its significance:

> A foul demon appeared in the desert, in the form of a woman, which caused many phantasms and seemed to give forth numerous oracles, though they were utterly false. They purported to concern the specifics of healing remedies, though they were of no use at all except to bring to destruction all those who trusted in them. Many people were caught in the hidden snare of this evil spirit and thought they should honour the demon with sacrifice and fat-offerings. In its name they made many offerings to the shrine. . . . . When Cyril heard of the phenomena at Menouthis he prayed for a way from God to overthrow the demon.[39]

In Cyril's second homily on the occasion when he went to Menouthis, he himself suggests that the Isis phenomena had even weakened the local church:

> We wished to bring assistance to all the local regions and especially the district around the church of the holy evangelists because many people had gone off into other various parts seeking out testimonies, and even christians were being led astray.[40]

Like his uncle before him, Cyril attacked the pagan practice of oracular divination, but the principle of spiritual communications and influences, far from being rejected, is here taken with the utmost seriousness. To the threat of a maleficent demonic presence in the area he applies the remedy of the beneficial presence of the more powerful christian martyrs, now localised by bringing their relics to the place where their efforts were needed. In response to the Isis shrine's appeal to the validation of oracular guidance from the deity we see the christian 'counter' with an account from Sophronius of Cyril's own vision given to him as hierarch of the great Church of Alexandria. Sophronius' account appears to be partly based on records of Cyril's, otherwise lost, and it tells us that, 'After Cyril's long prayers an angel appeared to him by night'[41] instructing him to translate the relics of St. Cyrus

[39] PG 87.3693.

[40] PG.77. 1101.

[41] PG.87.3688–3689, 3693.

the martyr from Alexandria to Menouthis. The tomb was opened in the church at the place which had been signified,[42] and indeed relics were found, but not of one but two people. Cyril set up a commission to inquire into the provenance of the relics[43] which identified them as the Diocletianic martyrs the monk Cyrus and the soldier John. Cyril declared both saints to be virgin-martyrs and in his sermon at Menouthis he confesses that not knowing which one was the Cyrus he had been instructed to take, he had simply brought both. He placed their relics under the protection of the monks of the old Pachomian monastery at Tabennisi who sent a delegation to Menouthis to take charge of the devotions there.

After his discovery of the saints Cyril inaugurated an octave of solemn celebrations. There was a great liturgical ritual culminating in the anointing of the relics in myrrh and perfumed balms, and then they were wrapped in linen and deposited in a heavily jewelled gold casket. Cyril carried the reliquary to Menouthis in a chariot at the head of a massive procession of the Alexandrian church.[44] The three fragments of Cyril's homilies that survive from this occasion are dated over the period of a week from July 26th to August 1st (possibly 427/8).

Cyril's intent was that the relics of the martyrs would immediately serve as a christian focus of opposition to the allurements of the Isis cult. To this end his own apologetic centres on two aspects. In the first place he argues that by their superior spiritual power, as virgin martyrs, the two ascetics would ruin the psychic force behind the sexually explicit temple rites of Isis, and expose them as morally dubious. For this reason he constantly characterises the martyrs as virginal ascetic warriors and, as such, a fitting inspiration for the celibate monks who would guard their tomb and whose very presence in the area would serve to subdue, in a very concrete way, any unbounded pagan enthusiasms. In the second place Cyril hopes to provide an alternative pilgrimage centre for popular hopes of healing which, as his final words suggest, will henceforth be free of charge:

[42] For a similar epiphany of hidden relics cf: Augusta Pulcheria's dream in which St. Thyrsos, in the time of Archbishop Proclus (434–446), appeared to the Empress to reveal the whereabouts of the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. The events are well connected by Holum (1982), p. 137 and passim, with the claim to sacral Basileia.

[43] PG.77.1101.

[44] PG.87.3696.

> The holy martyrs Saints Cyrus and John came out ready to do battle for the christian religion. . . . As their reward for their love of Christ they received the power to trample on Satan and expel the force of evil demons. Now that those who once were going astray have turned to the true and unmercenary healer, none of us need make up dreams, none of us cries out to the pilgrims: "The Mistress has spoken, and commands you to do this or that." For how can one be a Mistress and also a god expecting worship? Among the demons there is neither male nor female. What kind of character can they have when they want to be called by girls' names?[45] Now the people trample on these brainless myths and worn-out deceptions of divination, and instead are coming to the true and heavenly healers, those to whom the all-powerful God gave the authority to be able to effect cures when he said: Go and heal the sick. You received without charge, give without charge[46] (*Mt.10.8.*).

Cyril's strategy for evangelisation, more subtle than that of his uncle, seems to have worked. The name of Abba Kyros the martyr has been preserved down through the centuries, even under Islamic domination, to the present village of Aboukir.[47]

Such events, controversies, and literary engagements were the concerns, then, of the early years of Cyril's episcopate up to 428. What transpired afterwards is far better documented because it worked itself out on an international stage at a high academic and political level. Nonetheless the controversy that was now to begin to unfold springs from the same concerns that Cyril had so far consistently witnessed as an active pastor in his diocese, that is his desire to apply the christian religion in all its implications to the people at the most direct and engaging level he could. He was determined to draw water from the deep wells of popular christian piety, wishing to communicate a sense of the immediacy of the presence and power of his divine Lord, whose presence, as for example in the eucharistic mysteries, or in the healing virtues of the sacred relics of the martyrs, depended first and foremost on the immediacy and validity of the divine presence in the Incarnate One.

For Cyril, the elevated intellectual argument about christology and the validity and security of a simple christian life were ultimately one

[45] A mocking allusion to the Navigium, or ship-carrying, one of the main festivals of the Isis cult when it was the custom for male devotees to masquerade as women.

[46] PG.77.1105.

[47] Present feast day of Ss. Cyrus and John, the 'Holy Unmercenaries', is in the eastern calendar on January 31st.

and the same thing. This insight goes a long way to explain the passion and profundity of his systematic theological opposition to Nestorius of Constantinople. It is an issue of oecumenical significance for christian theology, spirituality, and worship, that cannot be reduced merely to the level of political antagonisms, however much these forces did play a part in creating the overall climate of dissent.

2. The Nestorian Controversy: The Prelude to an Oecumenical Crisis, 428–431

In 428 the throne of Constantinople was vacant, following the death of Sisinnius, and the ecclesiastical politics of the great city were once again in ferment. Sisinnius himself had been consecrated as a compromise candidate, and on his death after a very short time in office, the factional rivalry had reopened. One of the contenders for the earlier appointment had been Proclus, a bishop consecrated for the see of Cyzicos who had been unable to take up his office because the local clergy had disregarded the canonical rights of Constantinople and consecrated their own candidate.[48] In consequence, he became a significant figure in Constantinopolitan affairs, allied with leading monastic figures such as the famous recluse the archimandrite Dalmatius who had refused the Emperor's personal appeal to be elevated to the episcopal throne,[49] and the lay lawyer Eusebius (later to become Bishop of Dorylaeum) a leading actor in this crisis as well as in the controversies that preceded the councils of 449 and 451. Proclus' power base was not inconsiderable for he was closely associated with the Augusta Pulcheria, but the imperial court finally decided to circumvent the factions yet again by calling in an external candidate, a rank outsider by the name of Nestorius, who enjoyed in his own region of the Syrian church a high reputation for preaching and the ascetical rigour of his monastic life.

Nestorius had been a childhood friend of the recently appointed archbishop John of Antioch and presumably had some experience in the affairs of that church from the base of his own monastery of Euprepios, near Antioch itself. It cannot be doubted that Nestorius owed his appointment to the personal recommendation of John. Nestorius was also a close friend of Bishop Theodoret of Cyr, and together with Andrew of Samosata these three represented a scholarly

[48] Socrates. Hist. Eccl. 7.28.

[49] cf. Nestorius' account of the electioneering in his Book of Heraclides. Nau (1910), 242–243.

triumvirate of Antiochene theologians rooted in the tradition of the earlier Syrian teachers such as Mar Diodore (of Tarsus) and Mar Theodore (of Mopsuestia) who were then regarded as the great teacher-saints of Syria, having the status and venerability there that such as St. Athanasius had in Alexandria, though with less of an international following in the church at large. Nestorius, Theodoret, and Andrew were to be the main theological opponents of Cyril.

In the great conflict that was now to unfold, the issues cannot be reduced merely to the level of personality clashes, or even to the complex issue of the precedence of sees, or the involved political machinations of the imperial court (however important all three factors might be as constituent elements of the scene) for what was about to clash was no less than two great schools of ecclesiastical reflection, piety, and discourse. It would be no exaggeration to say that the theological disruption this caused, and the need for theological re-articulation it summoned forth, was of no less import than the Arian crisis of the preceding century and, as in that great dispute, the central issues of the faith were sensed to be threatened to such an extent that the argument ran on through numerous synods over more than one generation. Indeed the resolution of centrally important theological questions such as the unity and diversity of God, in the Logos doctrine of the Anti-Arians from 325–362, and the Trinity doctrine of the Council of 381, had itself created the conditions that demanded a clearer resolution of christological doctrine. This task fell to the generation of Cyril in the mid fifth century.

Nestorius was enthroned as archbishop on April 10th 428, and set to work immediately. He brought with him a delegation from his monastery including the priest theologian and zealot Anastasius, who would lead him to his ruin. Nestorius has tended to be romanticised by several mid-twentieth century accounts just as Cyril has been cast in the role of éminence grise. The facts are clear, however, that Nestorius was no less 'dogmatic', uncompromising, and ready to use the full extent of his powers, both political and canonical, than Cyril or any of the other leading hierarchs of this period. This entirely fits the context of fifth century Byzantine life. To cast the ancient hierarchs in the mould of twentieth century western european gentlemanly churchmanship is a peculiarly misinformed canon of judgement.

The contemporary historian Socrates[50] called Nestorius a proud and ignorant man whose innate and undisputed oratorical power masked

[50] Hist. Eccl. 7.29, 32.

a weakness of incisive thought. There is a lot in this that is true, but Nestorius was certainly no fool. Socrates' accusation that Nestorius was 'disgracefully illiterate' is partly his own type of Constantinopolitan prejudice against foreigners and partly based on Nestorius' claim that the earlier patristic tradition did not support or validate the title Theotokos (Mother of God) for Mary, whereas Socrates (doubtless using the florilegia that Cyril subsequently produced on the theme)[51] was able to demonstrate his own superior erudition by listing the Fathers who did in fact use the term.[52] At this period, however, Nestorius' failure to apply the title Theotokos is not a sign of theological incompetence[53] rather it demonstrates his thesis that the christological use of the word (which was now to come into the central arena of the argument) had never before been elaborated properly. Indeed the list of Fathers who had used the title, excepting the Cappadocians who depended on Origen, did little more, in Nestorius' estimation, than confirm his suspicion that here was a peculiarly Egyptian theologoumenon which he did not wish to see imposed on the church universally.

In fact, in all his doctrinal statements Nestorius shows himself to be a consistent, if none too clear, exponent of the longstanding Antiochene dogmatic tradition. He is no creative genius; most of what he says being a re-statement of his teacher Theodore of Mopsuestia's viewpoint, but he is an able enough repetiteur of an old tradition, though tragically not one whose genius could extend to remodelling it creatively in the light of a new and pressing need to redraft its understanding of Christ's personal integrity. It surprised him greatly that he should stir up so much controversy in Constantinople for merely saying what he had always taught about Christ, with no troubles whatsoever, at home in Antioch.

[51] His treatises addressed to the Royal Princesses, and to Theodosius, cf. De Recta Fide, (Pusey) 1877.

[52] Origen, Commentary on Deuteronomy, PG.12.813; Ibid. In Ps. 21.21; Ibid. Hom.7 In Lucam 7; and Ibid, as Socrates narrates 'in the first volume of his commentary on Romans' (Socrates. Hist. Eccl.7.32); Peter of Alexandria, PG 18.517; Alexander of Alexandria, Ep. Ad Alexandrum 12, PG. 18.568; Eusebius of Caesarea, Vita Constantini 3.43, PG. 20.1104; Athanasius, Con. Arianos 3.14, PG.26.349; Ibid. Vita Antonii 36, PG. 26. 897; Gregory Nazianzen Ep. 101. PG. 37.177; and of particular interest Gregory Nyssa Ep.3. PG.46.1024, where he pairs the term Theotokos with the corresponding Anthropotokos (Mother of the man) in which Nestorius followed him.

[53] Socrates himself admits that apart from his views on the Theotokos title, he did not think Nestorius was really heretical at all (Hist. Eccl. 7.32).

His importance actually lies in this fact of his representativeness, although at the same time it must be remembered to what extent the other representatives of the Antiochene tradition, such as John of Antioch, Theodoret, and Andrew of Samosata, could all in their own ways recognise, more readily than he, the point of the argument for Christ's integrity, and admit the ill-advised nature of Nestorius' immoveability. Whatever the respective merits of the personal qualities Nestorius brought to bear in this period, he is undoubtedly the man who brings two great and disparate traditions of christian theology into conflict in an open forum, and this was to demand that christians clarified longstanding presuppositions they had held since the close of the biblical era about the person of Christ. The synthesis that was called for in the light of this clash, one that was subsequently worked out across no less than the next four oecumenical synods, formed the tide mark of orthodoxy in Christianity for subsequent centuries.

On assuming office Nestorius set to work, in much the same way as had Cyril sixteen years earlier, by attempting to bring his episcopal city to a common religious view and practice. His hold over Constantinople, however, was by no means as secure as Cyril's over Alexandria, and Nestorius' early reformist efforts brought him a harvest of discontent, at home as well as abroad. He immediately alienated the monks of the city by recalling them to their monasteries, and forbidding their involvement in the numerous 'unofficial' ministries they had instituted around Constantinople. The monks had long been a focus for opposition forces both to court and episcopal palace. Before Nestorius' arrival there had been severe tension between the local hierarchs and the monks, and Pulcheria had intervened in the arguments to take some of the monastic groups under her protection, especially those led by notable ascetics in the suburbs of the imperial city such as Dalmatius, Alexander, and Hypatius. This was a move that greatly pleased the common people, whereby she extended her own sphere of influence while disarming the potential dangers to the dynasty of an unaligned source of popular power.[54] Nestorius was to make little headway in his efforts to bring the monks into line. The disaffection he caused

[54] The popular violence that the monks could rouse at synodical meetings, is often taken as a scandalous example of social decline—this judgement is frequently found in assessments of Cyril and Memnon's behaviour at Ephesus. The judgement neglects the realities of Byzantine politics in the fifth century. For a fuller context see Dagron (1970) and Gregory (1979).

in his own see was a major weakness when he was later to launch into international controversy.

He also dismayed many members of the aristocracy when he began to apply legal proscriptions against the heretics with little regard for the political ramifications. He possibly composed, as his own initiative, the harsh terms of anti-heretical legislation we find issued from the court of Theodosius at this time (428).[55] One of his first acts in fleshing out the legal policy was to order a demolition squad against the last remaining Arian chapel in Constantinople. This was pre-empted by the desperate congregation who themselves set the torch to the building which was subsequently burned to the ground. This was symbolically a dangerous act indeed considering how the barbarian tribes were flooding over the northern borders of the Eastern empire to infiltrate and conquer the provinces of the West, and how the Byzantine armies at this period still relied on Arian German mercenaries whose religious sensitivity it would be foolish to offend.[56] The destruction of the Arian chapel was seen as an unnecessarily dramatic and tactless way of proceeding. The unfailing wits of the city thereafter tagged Nestorius with the nickname of 'Torchie' as a sardonic comment on how he was heating up ecclesiastical life in so short a time after his appointment.

He certainly warmed the temper of the Augusta Aelia Pulcheria who wielded immense power in the Palace, manipulating her vacillating brother Theodosius II. Hers was a power base that cannot be underestimated throughout this theological conflict. Through Proclus she came down, eventually, on the side of Cyril. It was a theological preference for the Theotokos doctrine in which she was partly helped by her decided personal antipathy to Nestorius, and partly because she sensed in the dispute a whole reflection on the role and importance of woman's power—a direct parallel to the political role she had created for herself within the Basileia of her brother, and yet independent of it (to an extent)[57] by virtue of her very public repudiation for herself and for the younger princesses, of any possibility of dynastic marriage. The altar proclaiming her perpetually dedicated virginity stood prominently in Nestorius' cathedral. The Virgin Mary was a patroness

[55] cf. Holum (1982) p. 150.

[56] cf. Barhadbeshabba, Hist. Eccl. 21, P.O. 9. 528.

[57] The Basilissai did not, for example, have a power base like the Emperor's that was rooted in the command of magistracies. Deprived of this legal supremacy they developed a far more wide-ranging nexus of political influences.

for her, fruitful and powerful in her virginity.[58] This virginal status, and the great wealth which had been bequeathed to her and amassed during her time as Regent in her brother's minority, lay at the heart of the great sway Pulcheria commanded. It was a mistake of phenomenal importance for Nestorius to cross her on this very matter. But he did so nonetheless, possibly in all innocence at first, even on the occasion of the first state liturgy he conducted.

In the liturgy of the Great Church at Constantinople Pulcheria had claimed, and apparently been granted by Nestorius' predecessors, the privileges traditionally associated with the reigning Emperor. He alone of all laymen was allowed to receive the Eucharistic mysteries within the sanctuary. Pulcheria had customarily been at her brother's side to do so, and possibly regarded her virginal status allied with her Augustal rank as two important sacral reasons why she should continue in this privilege.[59] Nestorius was taken aback when she processed into the sanctuary on his first celebration and he refused to administer the sacraments. Sharp words were exchanged and he subsequently compounded his mistake by casting aspersions on the kind of virginity Pulcheria practised. In his own later writings, and certainly in the writings of the later Nestorian historians, nothing was too bad to attribute to Pulcheria. She became regarded as the Jezebel of the whole story, the evil woman who cast down the saintly archbishop. But in the same way she became the ascetic Saint Pulcheria for the Chalcedonians.

The later accounts Nestorius gives in his Book of Heraclides are particularly bitter and ought to be read with caution. There[60] he accuses her directly of being an adulteress, but more interestingly also calls her 'an aggressive female'. He liked independent women no more than he relished the unaligned monastic factions. In his attempts at this same period to stop women coming to Vespers in the cathedral (since no decent woman, he said, would want to be out at night in the city) he was certainly trying to undermine the status of female ascetics and the aristocratic women in the capital. One wife of a leading

[58] See Holum (1982) esp. ch. 5.

[59] Sources in the Nestorian text: Letter to Cosmas, para.8, Patrologia Orientalis, 13. 279; Book of Heraclides, Nau (1910) pp. 361–362; Abramowski (1963) pp. 15–20, has doubts about the tradition but still assigns to it the status of local gossip and dates the text to 436. Holum (1982) treats the source positively as an important indicator.

[60] Nau (1910) p. 89.

Senator shouted out from the women's gallery of his church exactly what she thought of him[61] as he was passing by in a procession one day.

At the time of his refusal of Pulcheria's right to communicate alongside the Emperor, Nestorius probably had no more in mind than the public statement that women ought to be subservient in church, and that if the Augusta wanted to be a consecrated virgin she ought to lead a retired life in a convent, not the spectacular social calendar she presided over in the palace. This could only have been seen by Pulcheria as a direct assault against her political power, and as a particularly bitter personal insult to her honour, for a public refusal by the bishop of her claim to consecrated virginity needed only a little elaboration in the bazaars of the city to become no less than a public slur against her chastity. In a similar show of his disapproval of Pulcheria's pretensions he removed a costly robe she had given as an altar covering in the sanctuary. This could only have been a studied insult against her, and a repudiation of her claims to any sacral standing within the church. A virgin's robe was a fitting gift to the Virgin's Son, but a matron's dress would have no place in the holy of holies. Nestorius' removal of the covering seems to have been a further and deliberate step in his moves against Pulcheria, and again it must inevitably have been seen as a rejection of her claims to an independent female basileia. The incident probably ought to be located later in 430 when Nestorius had persuaded the Emperor to support him, and his confidence ran high that he would be able to summon a general council to Constantinople and despatch his enemies without difficulty. Pulcheria's undoubted intervention then was still able to ruin his plans as we shall see.[62]

On Nestorius' part we must interpret his actions as proceeding either from bare-faced ambition, or crass ineptitude. Whatever was the case it was to cost him dearly, as he later had cause to ponder in the long years of his exile. It might have been that Nestorius was trying to intrude himself between the weak Emperor and the dominant sister, as the palace eunuch Chrysaphius successfully managed to do (for a short time) somewhat later.[63] Theodosius had depended utterly on

[61] Accounts in Barhadbeshabba, Hist. Eccl. 21. P.O. 9, 528; & John Rufus Plerophoria, 36, P.O. 8. 81–82.

[62] It was doubtless her influence that relocated the proposed general synod from Constantinople to Ephesus: the site, with its great shrine of Mary and its powerful bishop who was antagonistic to Nestorius could not have been better chosen to disadvantage the archbishop of Constantinople.

[63] Pulcheria's first act on seizing supreme power after the accidental death of her brother was to have Chrysaphius decapitated and impaled as a public enemy.

Pulcheria throughout the early years of his reign. She had even chosen a bespoke bride for him in the person of the Empress Athenais—Eudoxia. He itched to break free of her dominion, yet time and again could not bring himself to do so. Cyril too sensed the weakness of this fracture-line in the imperial household and later took advantage of it by appealing to the Theodosian royal women independently of the Emperor. The touchy rebuke this drew down on his head from the Emperor, despite Theodosius' claims that all were unanimous in the royal court, demonstrates that Cyril's reading of the relative worth of the power bases was perhaps more accurate than that of Nestorius.

On top of all this Nestorius had to deal with the problem of the unsettled factions within the church which he had inherited on his consecration. His announcement early in the summer of 428 that he intended to bring a strong hand to ordering the theological affairs of the Great Church opened up a local dispute that soon was to grow into an international crisis whose dimensions he could never have imagined.

The monastic party under the archimandrite and deacon Basil, (with Bishop Proclus behind them), with the support of the lawyer Eusebius and several other aristocratic patrons in the wings (not least the Augusta Pulcheria by this stage) came to Nestorius with a theological test-case for him to settle. They wanted him to make a statement affirming the orthodoxy of the veneration of Mary as Mother of God. They had clashed with a group, possibly that of Nestorius' own chaplain Anastasius, who were propagating the old Antiochene christology, arguing that the Theotokos title evidenced a defective theological understanding that could only be put right by the application to Mary of the title Anthropotokos (Mother of the Man). The Constantinopolitan monks were obviously wanting to draw Nestorius out into the open. When he later wrote to John of Antioch Nestorius described this as a local theological problem he found within his church.[64] He was not being entirely open about the fact that his own campaign of propagating Antiochene theology heavily at Constantinople had served to initiate the argument.

In a private audience in his palace Nestorius attempted an eirenic compromise by proposing a moderated form of Antiochenism to the local monks. He admitted that the terms God-Mother and Man-Mother, as they were being used by both contending parties, were capable

[64] Loofs, Nestoriana (1905) p. 185.

of orthodox interpretation, and ruled that each party's demand that the other should be proscribed as heretical was inadmissible.[65] His own solution to the dispute was to be followed by all. He pronounced that the argument had arisen because strictly speaking[66] both titles were inaccurate and capable of leading to foolish or heretical views about the person of Christ, or at the very least susceptible of serious misinterpretation, as had clearly proved to be the case. Theotokos, he argued, did not do justice to the fact that, strictly speaking, Mary was not the mother of God but rather the mother of the man whom christian faith recognizes as divine and thus calls God. On the other hand, the term Anthropotokos acknowledges that Mary is the mother of this man but can itself be taken to suggest that he is merely a man, which again is offensive to orthodox christian faith in the deity of Christ. One notices how the phrase 'strictly speaking' features prominently in his analysis. Throughout all his work Nestorius stressed the need for semantic exactness in this difficult theological area, to such an extent that the approach became the hallmark of his style.

In the end he sent both parties away having vetoed the use of their respective catch-phrases, and suggesting their reconciliation in his more accurate proposal that they should adopt the biblical notion of Mary as the Christ-mother (Christotokos). To describe Mary as the mother of the Christ was entirely accurate, he said, and capable of no heretical misinterpretation. By the use of this title it was clearly affirmed that it was the Christ who was God and Man. Mary was neither Mother of God nor merely Mother of the man. How he thought this would please anyone, even his own party, is difficult to comprehend.

His solution, far from ending the dispute with common agreement as to the archbishop's superior theological skills, convinced the monastic party that they had good grounds for their unease. Nestorius' refusal to allow the validity of the Theotokos title convinced them that, despite his avowals, his own christology was that of a 'mere man' (psilanthropism) in the manner of the ancient heresy of Paul of Samosata.[67] They arrived at this view on the basis of the following syllogism which was evidently a mockery of Nestorius' own pedantry: 'If Mary is not, strictly speaking, the Mother of God, then her son is not, strictly speaking, God.' The syllogism became a rallying standard for the whole opposition move-

[65] Nestorius, Ep. to John of Antioch. Loofs (1905) Nestoriana, p. 185.

[66] Akribos; a very common term in Nestorius.

[67] A form of Adoptionism whereby the Logos visited a human person, Jesus, to 'indwell him' with divine inspiration. The deity was quite distinct from this human person, the man Jesus. It was a case of two subjects alongside another (allos kai allos). The doctrine was condemned at the Synod of Antioch in 268, and Paul's name was associated with all similar schemes thereafter.

ment to Nestorius henceforth. The Mother of God title was seen as an absolute marker of the faith—now not only defending the honour of the Virgin Mother (whose cult had risen to newly important proportions in the fifth century), but more significantly in this argument fulfilling the role of a cardinal defence of belief in the personal deity of the Saviour. The idea that the Theotokos title is a bulwark of this christological confession, serves as the key argument in Cyril's first letter on the controversy 'To the Monks of Egypt'. He wrote this early in the following year, and clearly incorporated at the beginning of his discourse the arguments that his allies in the imperial city had already been using against their archbishop.

The failure of Nestorius' attempt to reach a satisfactory compromise on this deep-seated disagreement led to the rapid and more complete disaffection of the monastic party and, through the international network of monastic travel, news of the argument began to seep out far and wide. It is without question that Cyril had intelligence of the controversial debate from its inception. The monastic party looked to him from the earliest days as a protector, but his own ecclesiastical representatives, or agents, at the imperial court were highly skilled and already long experienced in negotiating a way through the complex factions of the corridors of power, far more so than Nestorius' Antiochene clergy at this period. Cyril's excellent intelligence network, the wealth of his church, and his powerful ability to represent himself at court became important factors in the subsequent dispute. At this period, however, in the late summer and Autumn of 428, he seems to have kept only a watching brief.

Matters began to move more quickly in the early part of 429 when Nestorius decided to pursue the theological controversy more systematically by initiating a series of public lectures in the cathedral on the nature of proper faith in Christ. His chaplain Anastasius gave the opening address and chose to begin, provocatively, with a thesis on the error of using the Theotokos title. His words repeated the longstanding argument: 'Let no man call Mary Mother of God for she was but a woman, and it is impossible for God to be born of a woman.'[68] He meant to exclude all notion of Mary as some form

[68] In the sense that the very term 'God' means 'to have no birth in time'. He is arguing that the incarnation did not change the unchangeable God, relativize the

of 'goddess' producing a divine offspring whose humanity was questionable, but the effect was to bring a very complicated issue into the public domain, for he had made his remarks in the cathedral church itself. Socrates tells us that his sermon 'created a great sensation, and troubled many both of the clergy and the laity who had previously been taught to acknowledge Christ as God.'[69] He is being somewhat disingenuous at this point in his narrative in suggesting that Anastasius had any intention of denying that Christ was God, but he intends to bring out the sense of scandal that this refined Antiochene christological approach gave to simple believers who confessed Jesus as God, or Christ as God, synonymously, and troubled to make no distinctions or qualifications at all in their language about the incarnate deity.

Bishop Proclus soon made a counter-attack with a famous sermon on the Virgin Mother of God, preached in the presence of Nestorius himself, on the Sunday before Christmas 428.[70] The sermon was greeted with loud applause, to the great annoyance of the archbishop. He felt his pulpit had been subverted by an enemy within the camp, and as soon as Proclus was finished he seems to have stood up to answer his points in a critical way.[71] It is possible, given the truncated ending of the present state of Nestorius' reply, that he was not listened to by the congregation.[72] Several of the ascetics already regarded themselves as separate from Nestorius' communion at this stage, including one of the most famous, St. Hypatius the archimandrite at Chalcedon, a spiritual teacher of Pulcheria and the royal princesses.

Nestorius would not let the matter rest with this. He decided to back up Anastasius' lead lecture with a series of his own sermons. These he delivered in the cathedral throughout the early months of 429. He intended them for publication and circulation in the neighbouring churches. Cyril's agents sent copies of these to him in Alexandria, and Marius Mercator, a Latin layman living in Constantinople at the time, also seems to have gathered information and translated at least five of the christological sermons among other works of the

absolute, or make historical the eternal. Cyril would have agreed entirely with the first two arguments, and found the whole point of his Christological disagreement with Nestorius in the third, which for him was not a statement to be avoided in Christology, rather the entire goal and glory of a belief in Christ.

[69] Socrates, Hist. Eccl. 7.32.

[70] ACO 1.1.1.103–107.

[71] fragments in Loofs, Nestoriana (1905) 337–338.

[72] So Bauer (1919) p. 31.

archbishop's.[73] It is quite possible that Mercator was one of the Papal agents in the city who from this time kept Pope Celestine's archdeacon Leo (later to be Pope Leo the Great) abreast of developments. Mercator is particularly interested to note how the christological issues relate to the current Western policy of the suppression of Pelagianism. It is highly doubtful whether anyone else in the East, at this period, saw any connection whatsoever.

In Nestorius' sermons the Theotokos title was one of the chief targets of attack. Socrates suggests that he became obsessed with it in a quite unreasonable way—but perhaps not so unreasonably when one considers that he identified the Theotokos camp as the locus of all opposition to his episcopal reforms in his own city. A large part of the vehemence of his moves against the theological tradition was probably directed against what he saw as the unpardonable disobedience of his episcopal power; nonetheless the rancour of the start of the campaign carried it far afield in the international domain and Cyril was surprised to see here such a stark Antiochenism, almost as if it were resuscitated from a previous generation, and apparently attempting to move itself to the centre stage by seizing the imperial capital.

After hearing Nestorius' sermons in the cathedral, his monastic opponents labelled him a new Paul of Samosata reviving the ancient heresy that Jesus was not 'strictly speaking' God, only a God-inspired man, and by implication not uniquely different from a whole series of other prophets and saints. The best interpretation that they were willing to give of his doctrine was that because of his insistence on precise qualifications of language in christology he foolishly taught some kind of split personality in Christ, a man Jesus alongside the divine Logos in some form of bi-polar relationship. Both interpretations were, of course, the caricatures of enemies rather than sympathetic scholarly attempts to give him a hearing. But although much recent scholarship has argued (accurately enough) that Nestorius was badly understood in his own day, it must be remembered that in ancient controversies the implications of a doctrine were as much part of the debate as the actual statements made, and in theological argumentation precedents were always sought from the nearest parallel in history much as legal argument today looks to precedent for its authority. In this case Nestorius' teaching was related back immediately to the

[73] cf. Loofs, Nestoriana (1905) pp. 225–361; Bibliographical details on the sermons of Nestorius and their present locations in Quasten (1975) p. 518.

earlier Syrian tradition of Diodore of Tarsus. For this reason it began to be propagated that Nestorius was teaching there were 'Two Sons' whereas orthodox faith demanded the believer should acknowledge only one. These criticisms of his doctrine were to stick, and to this day the popular view of Nestorianism is that it propounded a double subject, or 'Two Sons' christology. Nestorius himself never exactly states this. Later in exile, he denied the legitimacy of such a doctrine explicitly. The fact remains, however, that people were looking more to the implication of his words than their exact context, and his reliance on semantic niceties in a series of preached sermons subsequently published shows a singularly bad choice of didactic method. Many at the time thought that he had implied the 'Two Sons' approach by attacking its apparent opposite, subsumed in the Theotokos title, without giving a sufficiently clear indication in his own theory as to why he should not be regarded as a disciple of Diodore's.

In the early months of 429 Cyril sat down to compose his Paschal Homily for that year, his seventeenth. In this encyclical letter to Egypt the patriarch announced the date of Easter and gave general exhortations to his churches. It is here that we see the first signs of a considered theological assessment of the current debate emerging, even though it is embryonic in form. In the text of the letter there is no direct reference to Constantinople or the Nestorian affair but it is undoubtedly in Cyril's mind for he uses the occasion to affirm the reality of the manhood of Christ but insists on the singleness of his divine personality—the classical and orthodox Alexandrian position from which he will not move an inch in all his subsequent theologising. In the Paschal Homily 17 he takes care to apply the title Meter Theou (a synonym of Theotokos) to demonstrate his point.

In the Spring of that same year matters reached a serious pitch at Constantinople when the lawyer Eusebius arranged for a public placard to be carried around the city openly accusing the archbishop of the heresy of the Samosatene.[74] The monastic leaders caused demonstrations in the cathedral to disrupt Nestorius' preaching. On one such occasion the Master of Offices came down with instructions from the archbishop to lay hands on one monk who was haranguing him from the body of the church. The official was going to flog the insubordinate and exile him from the capital but a crowd of supporters overwhelmed him and carried the ascetic off in triumph, shoulder

[74] ACO 1.1.101.

high, to the protection of the monastery of St. Euphemia which had barred its doors to Nestorius. There, with complete impunity, he carried on his campaign of insulting his archbishop.[75] On another occasion Nestorius answered his monastic hecklers, who kept raising objections and questions in the course of his sermons, to the effect that he would certainly give them a proper reply if they should care to call at his palace the following morning. Some innocents took him at face value; led by the archimandrite Basil they duly turned up at his residence the next day and received a good thrashing for their pains. This was heralded as Nestorius' inability to engage in rational exchange, and lost him some ground in the city. The monks composed a formal petition to the Emperor seeking Nestorius' trial for heresy and mismanagement of church affairs.[76] There are signs that the civic authorities became increasingly unwilling to intervene when he wished to pursue the dissidents with the force of law. One reason for this must have been the known fact that many of the aristocrats had lost sympathy with him, and that the Augusta Aelia Pulcheria had opened a church near her own quarters where the protesting ascetics could celebrate the sacraments apart from their archbishop's communion, safe under her protection. She had championed dissident ascetics against the hierarchy in the administration of Nestorius' predecessor, and it was public knowledge that she had emerged the victor in the contest of authorities then. Court officials were unwilling to cross her and accordingly not ready to support Nestorius' zeal with police force.

It was at this time that Cyril decided to move publicly himself. He had been circumspect up to the point that Nestorius' treatises began to circulate openly but by the time that the argument had become common knowledge in the monasteries of Egypt he regarded it as his canonical right to intervene, as the problem had now affected his own church. At this time he composed his important Letter to the Monks which he circulated through Egypt and ensured that copies were sent to Constantinople. It considerably annoyed Nestorius when he read it. From this point onwards Cyril began to make a serious patristic and biblical study of the issues involved. His background reading is quite evident in the large works he was shortly to send to the imperial court, replete as they are with patristic and biblical substantiations. This first venture into apologetic christological writing

[75] John Rufus, Plerophoria, P.O. 8, 78–81.
[76] ACO 1.5.7–10.

was soon to develop into a veritable avalanche of texts over the next two and a half years.

Nestorius meanwhile directed one of his colleagues, Photius, to draft an answer to the points Cyril raised in his Letter to the Monks. He also made significant moves on the wider political front which set off loud resonances in the Eastern and Western churches alike—particularly those of Rome, Alexandria, and Ephesus, whose common unity at a political as well as an ecclesiastical level was to prove disastrous for Nestorius at the later council. It seemed a small action, easily passing out of notice unless one realised the implications, but he began two commissions of enquiry in his ecclesiastical chancery: an examination of certain complaints from Alexandrian clerics, and a review of the claims of certain exiles from the West who had been condemned by Western synods. The first case was a veiled legal review of Cyril's administration. The second a review of Papal policy condemning the Pelagians.

The canonical right of the church of Constantinople to act as supreme court of appeal for the Eastern churches had been enshrined by the canons of the Council of Constantinople in 381.[77] From the outset, however, Rome had been unwilling to recognise the validity of these specific canons. It is not simply that Constantinople had assumed a secondary rank in the list of most important sees, for the various 'rankings' were not strictly hierarchical at any stage of the functioning of the Pentarchy of patriarchs—what was really at issue was the jurisdictional purview of the see of the imperial city. Its remit was already extending out over the territories of Asia Minor and its undisputed place as the capital of the civilised world was now pressing the church courts at Constantinople into the role of the leading christian tribunal of the entire oecumene, a role which until the end of the fourth century Rome had fulfilled without rival. Alexandria shared Rome's aversion to the rise of the new star in the ecclesiastical firmament, as did Ephesus, the metropolitan capital of the Asian Province whose bishops had seen their prestige wane as the imperial city waxed. The affair of the deposition of John Chrysostom, from Cyril's youth, showed how alive the whole issue still was. Chrysostom had applied the canons of Constantinople I rigorously in a campaign

[77] Canon 3: 'Let the bishop of Constantinople have the priorities of honour after the bishop of Rome, because of its being New Rome.' Pedalion. p. 210, New York, 1983.

designed to bring the churches of Asia Minor more directly under his control. In the course of his campaign he had even deposed bishops on canonical charges, thereby undermining the range of the authority of the bishops of Ephesus. What Nestorius was doing, by adjudicating in these two cases relating to Rome and Alexandria alike, was taking care to send clear signals to his episcopal colleagues that Constantinople was now ready to assume the role of the ultimate court of appeal in the christian world, on matters of discipline but also, implicitly, on doctrinal standards too. For these reasons it is not possible to regard Nestorius' decision to open these two commissions of enquiry as simply coincidental.

In the first instance Nestorius decided to hear the case of certain clerics and lay people who felt they had been too harshly treated by Cyril's judicial court at Alexandria. The review of the cases at Constantinople signalled a clear threat to Cyril, and was recognised as such from the start, for Cyril was careful to disarm it in his Second Letter to Nestorius where he gave his legal evidence against the convicted laymen,[78] and glossed over his quarrel with his dissident clergy (he was hastily patching up all differences with them behind the scenes).[79] If Nestorius found for the petitioners, the best that could result would be a public humiliation for Cyril, the worst could be no less than a legal call for his deposition from office.

In the second instance Nestorius was aware that several Western bishops had fled to the imperial court for redress after their synodical excommunication by Pope Celestine on charges of Pelagianism. They had been in the East for some while. Theodore of Mopsuestia had received them amicably in his own see several years earlier, and possibly Nestorius had made their acquaintance then. It was always useful to have dissidents at the Royal City, as a leverage point on others to be used when occasion should demand. Now it seemed their time had come.

The exiles were highly prominent figures including the main opponent of St. Augustine, Bishop Julian of Eclanum, along with Bishops Florus, Orontius, and Fabius. Together they commanded no little theological ability and would have been able to press their case both politically and theologically with a degree of persuasiveness. The East

[78] 'Having a reputation one would not wish upon one's worst enemy.'

[79] cf. Schwartz (1928); After Ephesus the dissident clerics are found back in the Alexandrian Church with Cyril.

did not really see the point of the Pelagian dispute at this period. Much of what Pelagius had said about the need for the human individual to 'work out his own salvation in fear and trembling' simply seemed to be a re-statement of centuries of traditional ascetical doctrine. Allied to this Augustine's central emphasis on predestination appeared to many in the East (as it still does) a particular theologoumenon of the African tradition which ought not to be imposed, in its stated form, on the church universally. Nestorius was much occupied how to use the presence of the exiles to the greatest effect and, without actually committing himself to a formal retrial, he did send to Rome a letter informing the Pope of the attendance of the exiles at the royal court and the nature of the charges they were making about the injustice of their treatment. The letter was peremptory in tone and carefully designed to raise the suspicion of a suggestion that he might open up the case again.

As far as the West was concerned the exile of the Pelagians was seen as a hoped-for end to the long drawn out controversy, and there was no desire to see it re-opened in the present climate of the great waves of barbarian incursions currently threatening to break over the Western provinces, especially Africa. Similarly, any canonical review of the case in Constantinople would have been an implicit assertion of the juridical superiority of New Rome over Old Rome, and this Pope Celestine refused to admit under any circumstances. The fact that Nestorius seemed to be sheltering these prominent exiles was brought to the attention of the Pope much quicker than Nestorius had presumed, by means of the papal agents in the capital. This was to lose him a lot of ground indeed.

After receiving a copy of Cyril's Letter to the Monks, Nestorius lost no time in informing Cyril that he regarded the work as a gratuitous and undeserved act of aggression. Cyril's reply, his First Letter to Nestorius,[80] made it clear that he regarded Nestorius, not himself, as the direct cause of the dispute, and that he saw it as his episcopal duty to safeguard the character of the faith which he felt had been unnecessarily compromised. In this letter Cyril suggested that he was not only acting on his own behalf, but answering queries put to him by others concerning the faith of Nestorius. The implication was very pointed here, to the effect that Rome was closely scrutinising the case, and that Cyril enjoyed Celestine's confidence. Cyril had in effect replied in kind to Nestorius' canonical threats.

[80] Ep.19.

Nestorius' response was to bluff it out, but this was a serious mistake which he proceeded to compound. After his first letter to Rome was duly ignored by the papal chancery Nestorius sent a second, even sharper, note requiring that Celestine should send him information on the Pelagians—presumably the dossiers of evidence from the earlier synodical processes, which indicated clearly that he intended to proceed with a formal review of their cases. Rome would never acknowledge this aspect of the controversy. It regarded the Pelagian condemnations as irreversible judgements, and filed this second letter, unanswered, along with its precursor as it turned to gather more evidence of its own on the new Archbishop and the nature of the reports that were emanating from his city to suggest that there was a theological crisis developing.

Cyril's implication in his first letter to Nestorius that Rome was interested in the theological controversy, was no idle threat. Indeed it was Cyril who had ensured that, apart from its own intelligence reports sent from Constantinople, the Roman chancery should have the advantage of all the evidence he himself had acquired. Throughout the winter of 429 and the early months of 430 he had worked through the published writings of the new Archbishop and digested sections of the sermons which he thought to be particularly objectionable. This dossier was assembled in parallel with a florilegium of unimpeachable patristic authorities to serve as a contrasting canon. It was a first draft, as it were, of the more substantial work, De Recta Fide, which he would later send to the Emperor. With a fine diplomatic gesture of having the complete work translated into Latin for the benefit of the Romans he sent this to the Pope by the hand of his own deacon Posidonius at Easter of the year 430. After receiving Cyril's dossier, Rome's suspicions were confirmed and the Archdeacon Leo set up a formal commission of enquiry, asking the easterner John Cassian, the abbot of Marseilles, to comment on the writings in preparation for a formal synodical hearing at Rome later in the year.

In the meantime Nestorius had been continuing his campaign unabashedly. In February of 430 news filtered back to Cyril in Alexandria of the latest scandal that had set the city talking. Nestorius had invited his friend Bishop Dorotheus of Marcianopolis, in the province of Moesia near the capital city, to preach in the cathedral during the course of one of his visits. He was a hardliner and took matters beyond their present level by actually asserting that anyone who 'dares to call Mary the Mother of God is anathema'.[81] When

[81] The story is preserved in Cyril's Letter to Celestine after the Council of Ephesus.

he had finished preaching, Nestorius went with him into the sanctuary where they communicated together and concluded the liturgy. It was now clear to all where Nestorius' real sympathies lay.

Cyril, hearing of this, sent his now famous Second Letter to Nestorius[82] which demonstrates the effect his own extensive study has had. This letter was destined to be given canonical standing at the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon as a synopsis of the key theological issues at stake. In it, Cyril not only defends the title Theotokos against accusations that it was reviving the heresy of Apollinarism, but he denies the very legitimacy of using alternative christological schemes such as the 'association of personas' the Antiochene thinkers had spoken of. This was the mainstay of Nestorius' own way of thinking, and neither side was unaware that now the argument had polarised sharply. Cyril also composed, and began to circulate in this Spring of 430, his Five Books Against Nestorius.[83]

For his part Nestorius followed the signal given in the sermon of Dorotheus and began to treat his dissidents in Constantinople as recalcitrant heretics. He deposed several of the leading monastic agitators, who inevitably appealed to the Emperor against him, demanding that an oecumenical council should review their case. It was the first time the idea had been mooted, and it seems to have lodged in the Emperor's head as a possible way out of an increasingly intractable dispute. Nestorius also composed an irate reply to Cyril's Second Letter. In this text Nestorius argues that Cyril was right to teach the two natures were united in one person, and right to say that the divinity cannot suffer in itself, but that when he goes on to speak of the deity 'participating in suffering' he undoes all his good work. His conclusion is heavy with sardonic insult. Cyril, he suggests, is a little 'too zealous for the cause of God' and too interested in the affairs of the church of Constantinople. Nestorius tells him that he has been misinformed about the real state of affairs in the capital by clerics who have since been tried and condemned for the heresy of Manicheism. All is well in his church, and the Emperor professes an irreproachable faith. The last two points are, again, merely lightly veiled threats. What he means is that Cyril's monastic party have already been tried and deposed by his synodical court, and that the Emperor is fully on his side.

Throughout the summer of 430, however, the ascetics continued

[82] Ep. 4. PG. 77.44–50.
[83] ACO 1.6.13–106.

secure in their high moral standing at the capital, attracting much sympathy in the general knowledge that they had powerful patrons behind them. As for Theodosius being in support of the Archbishop, this did indeed seem to be the case, despite the problems Nestorius had caused. Knowing this to be so Cyril directed substantial works to the Palace directly. The De Recta Fide was sent to the Emperor personally, and separate treatises (Ad Reginas) to the Empresses Pulcheria and Eudoxia, and another to the Royal Princesses Arcadia and Marina. These were designed to give, in separate works, the basic issues of the dispute, the centrally important authorities, and some aspects of the higher level of argumentation that was going on.

In his De Recta Fide Cyril presents the Emperor with a long line of unimpeachable authorities, and then attempts to isolate a central argument to the effect that although Nestorius was not mistaken in his desire to distinguish natures in Christ this was not much more than a stating of the obvious—that deity is not flesh or vice versa. Cyril must have heard that it was already on the basis that the Alexandrian opposition heretically confused the natures that Nestorius had presented himself as a champion of orthodoxy to the Emperor and had thus gained his ear. Cyril wanted to disabuse Theodosius of that idea and thus pricked the bubble by going on to argue, in his apologia, that Nestorius moved from the statement of a truism of the difference of natures to a heretical and logical error in presuming that this differentiation must inevitably mean a separation of natures, and even worse a differentiation of subject centres in Christ.[84] The work is an important chapter in the developing argument. Its two great constitutive ideas are firstly that if it is not God who personally effects our salvation as the subject of the incarnation then salvation is rendered ineffectual and the whole point of Christianity is lost; and secondly that a double-subject christology which divorces the man from the God in Christ makes void the church's hope and experience of redemption in and through the Eucharist, since the Eucharist is a life-giving sacrament precisely because it is the very flesh of God himself.[85] The eucharistic aspect of the controversy was never afterwards far away from Cyril's mind, which is a demonstration of how practical and concrete[86] his theology always was, rising as much from liturgical and spiritual experience as from logical and traditional systematic prescripts.

[84] cf. De Recta Fide. ch.6.
[85] cf. Gebremedhin (1977); Mahe (1907); Michaud (1902); Chadwick (1951).
[86] Or in Cyril's terms 'Economic'; that is, to do with the 'Economy' of salvation

Cyril's attempt to hedge his political position by appealing separately to Theodosius and the royal women misfired on this occasion, for it was greatly resented by the Emperor. He had been touched on a nerve, and in his subsequent letter summoning Cyril to attend his council he rebuked him for his impudence in even suggesting that all were not unanimous within the Royal Household.

This backfire of Cyril's plans must have encouraged Nestorius greatly at this period in the late summer of 430, and made him feel secure in the patronage of the Emperor. By this time he had grave suspicions that Cyril was seeking synodical support from the West, and the silence with which Rome greeted his letters must have struck him as ominous. He decided, therefore, to adopt a similar strategy and pre-empt all moves against him. He wrote at this time to John of Antioch appealing for assistance and advice. He also seems to have petitioned Theodosius to order an international Synod to review the whole theological question, not least Cyril's part in it. He wanted a small gathering of theological experts from each ecclesiastical province. It was thus not so much a general council he had in mind[87] as a more representative version of his own local synod, and the way he described the agenda made it clear that it would be a trial of Cyril not simply a general theological colloquium. He clearly thought that this policy was a sure way out of all difficulties, and would unquestionably establish his hold over his own church as well as consolidating his international standing. The fatal presupposition was that the meeting would take place, naturally enough, in the Royal City itself.

Although this seems to have been part of Theodosius' initial agreement to the idea, which he eventually gave in the winter of 430, by the time the international synod became a reality, in the Spring of the following year, someone had changed the venue to the city of Ephesus, the great Marian shrine in Asia Minor. One can

which God was working in the act of Incarnation. The Incarnation is, thus, for the Alexandrian fathers, primarily an energy of transformation, a soteriological impulse designed to redeem and deify human beings. All Cyril's thought about Christology is characterised by these dynamic motives.

[87] Councils of the church had always included all bishops, however unlearned, for they were not seen so much as theological colloquia as inspired perceptions of the truth by sacred hierarchs. His brief experience of his own synods at Constantinople might have led him astray on this point, for they were more in the manner of consultative assemblies for the Archbishop of Constantinople when leading bishops came to visit the royal court. This 'Home Synod' of Constantinople, however, was not a commonly accepted archetype of what a 'council' meant in the fifth century church.

but suspect the hand of Pulcheria here. At a stroke she had deflected the tide that had hitherto been running in the Archbishop's favour. When Nestorius finally heard this bombshell he must have had cause to regret his own proposal of the idea of a synod, for the circumstances of using Ephesus could hardly have been less favourable for him. Other pieces of news as they came in to him in that end of year and early spring were to give him further cause for anxiety. John of Antioch, on whom he had been relying to offset any possible official censure from Rome or Alexandria, replied to him in a very lukewarm fashion, urging caution and compromise. Nonetheless, armed with the increasing confidence that he had secured Theodosius' agreement to an international meeting, he wrote his Third Letter to Celestine where he describes the Theotokos dispute as a ploy on Cyril's part to avoid his own trial and censure for canonical irregularities. The letter to Celestine suggests very heavily that a large synod is to adjudicate the issue in the Royal City, but it was a premature bluff. Theodosius' formal agreement was still not given, and Nestorius at that time only had in his hand the cards of the various complaints he had received from a few disreputable Alexandrians against Cyril's administration. He must have known that he was leaning on a fragile reed there. His letter is, therefore, quite misleading, and was possibly designed to forestall any synodical meeting held against him in Rome, which by now he had deduced was a real possibility. This third Roman letter, like its two earlier exemplars, was greeted by silence.

From Cyril's point of view, before he received the Emperor's acerbic letter at the end of the year, everything seemed to be running in his favour. The disaffected clergy at Constantinople, orchestrated by Cyril's own agents there, had drafted a petition which they wished to present to the Emperor, calling for Nestorius' deposition. Cyril's agents sent him a draft of this, hoping that he would be the sponsor for its passage through the royal court but he was not at all pleased with this development and ordered the move to be abandoned. He had already initiated a proper canonical procedure and had no wish to use the Emperor to short-circuit ecclesiastical law, particularly when Nestorius had a readier access to the court than he did, and when Theodosius was so notoriously a vacillator. He told his apocrisarii to await the results of the Roman commission of enquiry. This reply to his own agents, and through them to the dissident faction at Constantinople, proves the falsity of the oft-heard complaint that it was Cyril's great fault never to have really listened to what Nestorius

was saying, for his letter is a succinct and cogent analysis of his opponent's argumentation. In it Cyril concludes that Nestorius' replies to his previous letters had centred only on the notion of the impassibility of the Godhead, and that this merely sidestepped the real point at issue, which was the personal integrity of the incarnate Lord. Both this, and his argument in the De Recta Fide, clearly show Cyril had his finger well and truly on the pulse of the issue. In comparison Nestorius' analyses of the argument and his sermons are circular and unfocused. The same can be said of the other Antiochene apologists.

In the summer of 430 Cyril's new books, the Five Tomes Against Nestorius, were beginning to circulate and have their desired effect. Rome was meeting to adjudicate the issue, and its verdict was already assured as far as Cyril was concerned. Everything must have seemed more than satisfactory. Indeed this point of summer and late autumn of 430 marks the pinnacle of his early successes. Things were to become increasingly difficult for him thereafter.

The Orientals seemed to Cyril to be an obviously problematic area and to approach them he wrote in the late summer of 430 directly to the 'Grand Old Man' of the Oriental churches, the centenarian bishop Acacius of Beroea. Cyril was hoping to influence wider Syrian opinion through him. He had an earlier acquaintance with Acacius from many year's previously when they were both present at the Synod of the Oak engaged in the trial of St. John Chrysostom. Acacius' reply to Cyril's overtures was, however, evidently non-committal. He refused to be drawn into the dispute. He answered that he could see no great problem with Nestorius' doctrine anyhow, and expressed his sorrow that such a scandalous argument should have arisen at all. Cyril was counselled to seek for a peaceful and edifying solution to the conflict.

Having made no progress in this quarter his spirits were certainly raised by the long-awaited news from Rome that arrived at the end of summer of that busy year of 430. Archdeacon Leo's consultation with Cassian had been concluded (rather poorly it must be admitted for he had only produced a rambling and unfocused critique of Nestorius' works) with Cassian's pronouncement against the orthodoxy of Nestorius. He connected it, and thus fatally doomed it as far as Rome was concerned, with the heresy of Pelagianism—something that had probably already been in his initial brief from Rome. A Synod was called at Rome on August 11th 430 and Nestorius' teaching was formally anathematised by Pope Celestine and the Italian Bishops.

The Pope demanded a recantation from Nestorius and a profession of orthodox faith. He did not specify what this should be, except that it should harmonise with the creed of the Roman and Alexandrian churches. In his letter to Alexandria, Celestine effectively made Cyril the representative and executive of the Roman synodical decree, and this nominal delegation strengthened Cyril's hand canonically to such an extent that he continued to regard himself acting and speaking for the two great sees even up to the following year, and even when Celestine had sent his own delegation to the council at Ephesus. The Roman synod also communicated its verdict directly to the East—to Nestorius, to John of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, and the chief bishops of Macedonia (which at that period looked canonically to the Roman see) bishops Rufus of Thessalonike and Flavian of Philippi.

The crisis had now gained an irreversible momentum. Antioch and Constantinople were busy with consultations, the latter involving the royal court which now began to realise that the dispute had moved into a much more serious international context. The rift with Rome threatened the internal spiritual unity of the Empire at the very time when barbarian incursions were threatening its political coherence, especially in the West.

In conveying his verdict to Constantinople Pope Celestine had vindicated Cyril's theology as in accordance with the Latin tradition of Hilary, Damasus, and Ambrose. In a clearly hostile letter he mentioned Nestorius' sheltering of Pelagian heretics, and nullified his canonical depositions of his opponents at Constantinople, giving him ten days in which to recant. The christological issue had not really been addressed, and the old problem of Rome's canonical right to intervene in the East had risen once more to the fore, clouding the issue rather than resolving it. Despite Rome's hope that its word would be enough,[88] this manner of resolving doctrinal disagreement had never been the canonical procedure of the Eastern churches, who from the earliest times had followed a synodical process, not allowing monarchical rights of governance to any supreme bishop.[89] Immediately on

[88] As Augustine had expressed it: Roma locuta est causa finita est. (Rome has spoken, the issue is resolved); many catholic church histories continue to approach the entire controversy as a demonstration of the principle of papal primacy. In the fifth century the only party who held that perspective on matters was the Roman Chancery itself.

[89] From the time of Constantine I the eastern bishops had applied synodical process, appeals to the great metropolitan sees, and direct petitions to the Emperors, all as

receipt of the Pope's letter in Constantinople the Emperor resolved on his course of action. His capital's see had to be saved from public humiliation, and so, in November 430, he signalled his final agreement to the proposals for an oecumenical synod to consider the whole issue from the beginning. In the eyes of the court, this oecumenical gathering would supercede, de iure, the Roman synodical decrees, or those of any other local church. At the moment, however, Cyril was not aware of these developments.

When the Roman verdict was communicated to Alexandria, it was the occasion for Cyril to convoke his own synod of Egyptian bishops. They formally repeated, in November of the same year, the condemnation of Nestorius' doctrine, and whereas the Roman synodical letter had not made a christological exposition, Cyril remedied the defect and ensured that his own church would supply one. This he did in two forms. The first amounts to his Third Letter to Nestorius, which is a general statement of the Alexandrian position to which Rome itself had given its assent. The second was to raise storms of controversy, for he appended to the letter a list of twelve propositions to be formally renounced by Nestorius (the Twelve Chapters, or Anathemas) if he wished to avoid the sentence of condemnation from the churches of Rome and Alexandria. Cyril made acceptance of the anathemas a condition of Nestorius' readmission to communion, and therefore designed the exposition of Alexandrian christology propositionally in the most direct fashion, in primary colours as it were, specifically determined to deny the major premises of Nestorius' thought, and to allow him no room for verbal manouevring.[90]

Rome's vague desire that Nestorius should recant his opposition to the Theotokos doctrine and profess a consonant faith, had left the

legitimate methods of securing religious policy. Especially from the time of Damasus onwards, Rome had developed its theologoumenon of the prime apostolicity of its see (because of its Petrine tradition). This had a great impact on the Western churches who looked to Rome as their metropolitan centre, because no other see in the West had any claim to having been founded by an apostle. This was hardly the case in the Eastern church. So many cities claimed the apostles as their original founders that the doctrine of apostolicity had developed along different lines: any church which preserved apostolic doctrine was regarded as an apostolic see. From the earliest times the difference of ecclesiology led to a different view between Rome and the Eastern churches over episcopal rights of intervention in other churches. The issue continues to the present day in the division between the Orthodox and Roman communions.

[90] He had already stated that he regarded Nestorius as 'crooked' in his use of words, and rightly sensed that the latter could easily make a confession of faith that was as ambivalent as his other statements if it was not specified for him in advance.

door open to a large measure of possible adjustment between the different theological positions, given that a broad agreement on single-subject christology had been secured. When John of Antioch received a copy of the Roman verdict he had in fact urged Nestorius to conform to its reasonable demands, adding that this was the advice of many of the other oriental bishops.[91] By adding the Anathemas to specify the nature of Nestorius' recantation, Cyril had shown his determination not to leave the central issue of the christology open to such a breadth of interpretation. He was determined to press the point of single-subject christology in the most vigorous manner he could, and this is why his Anathemas leave no room at all for manouevre. They are a bold and strong statement of the Alexandrian position, in the graphic language of paradox, especially the famous twelfth, or 'Theopaschite', anathema urging the full implication of incarnational theology—that God died in the flesh.

Up to the point of sending these Chapters attached as a necessary condition of Nestorius' rehabilitation, Cyril had found that the resolution of the controversy was moving more or less satisfactorily in his direction. The furore caused by the publication of the Anathemas in the oriental churches changed the picture considerably, and was to put him on the defensive for the next three years, for it was widely believed by the orientals of the great Antiochene patriarchate (a belief much fostered by Nestorius) that Cyril had greatly overstated his case. Several of the hardline opponents of Alexandria were certain that he had even lapsed into the heresy of Apollinaris. Before the end of his life Cyril had to provide no less than three full scale works of apologetic to defend his cause by explaining what he really meant by the Anathemas. The Explanation of the Twelve Chapters in the present collection of translated texts is one example of these, addressed to a wide circle of bishops and designed to regain support for himself as the spokesman of a properly oecumenical christology. The other two apologies were designed to refute the more detailed attacks on his position by able theologians of the Antiochene tradition—mainly Andrew of Samosata and Theodoret of Cyr. From 430 onwards these two were his main intellectual opponents.

On more than one occasion, particularly at the council in the following year, Cyril must have questioned the wisdom of summarising his careful and complex thought in that vulnerable propositional format,

[91] ACO 1.1. 93–95.

for it was to cost him such a large diversion of his energies. Nonetheless, when he attached them to the Egyptian synodical letter he must have felt greatly confident, still unaware that Nestorius had pre-empted him by persuading Theodosius to move for a general council. At first Nestorius gave no answer, but Cyril was determined to press home the canonical sentence and sent from Egypt a delegation of four of his bishops, Theopemptus, Daniel, Potamon, and Comaros, to deliver the synodical documents in person and to demand a response on the spot.

They arrived from Alexandria in the imperial city on Saturday December 6th 430. On the Sunday following they entered the cathedral at the most dramatic moment they could choose, during the course of a liturgy which was being attended by most of the members of the royal court. Entering the apse, where Nestorius was enthroned, they delivered their texts and decree to him personally. He was unable to make much of a response in the circumstances, and so arranged for them to attend at his palace the following morning. Subsequently, having read the texts, he refused them an interview when they arrived the next day. His feelings of outrage surfaced on the following Saturday December 13th when he arranged to speak to a packed cathedral on the matter.

'Isn't the Egyptian the eternal enemy of Constantinople and Asia?' he said, colouring the dispute as if it was another version of the attack on St. John Chrysostom, the great saint who symbolically united both cities. He suggested in this sermon that Cyril's political ambitions were at the root of the whole controversy which he felt had grown out of all proportion from a dispute over the honorific title of the virgin Theotokos. This he was now prepared to accept, 'for the sake of peace', as long as it was generally agreed that all Arian and Apollinarist readings of the term were ruled out. This, his first public gesture of compromise,[92] appeared on the occasion to be popular. When he repeated in the liturgy of the following Sunday that he was prepared to accept the legitimacy of the title Theotokos he was loudly applauded by his congregation. He still argued that the adoption of the title Christ-Mother would be a far better theological procedure, and so even after his compromise his opponents must have felt that there had been no movement whatsoever from his first arrival in the city when he adopted the same position. At the end of his Saturday sermon Nestorius had concluded on a buoyant note: if Cyril came to the imperial city,

[92] Following the advice given by John of Antioch.

where the Emperor's troops would ensure that no riotous machinations could take place, then everything could be sorted out very quickly indeed. Of course he did not specify whether this would be by theological exchange or merely the arrest of Cyril—and archimandrite Basil and his monks, still nursing their bruises, must have had cause to ponder his meaning. The remark, however, indicates his self-confidence was running high at the prospect of what he still thought at this stage was to be the order of the day—a council held in Constantinople under his presidency, and which would probably include a judicial review of Cyril's behaviour. His presumptions were to prove sadly unfounded.

The Augusta Pulcheria had not been idle in the meantime, and when the formal arrangements for the great council were begun Nestorius could only have been dismayed to find out that the venue had been determined for Ephesus, the metropolitan capital of Asia Minor. The site had ostensibly been recommended for its capacity to supply foodstuffs for the assembly from a greater agricultural hinterland than Constantinople; but in reality Ephesus was the greatest christian shrine dedicated to Mary then in existence. A place more likely to be antagonistic to Nestorius could not have been thought of. Nestorius must have been further dismayed when he found out that an insignificant detachment of troops had been allocated to superintend the proceedings. Nestorius clearly had a sharper sense of Cyril's political weight than Theodosius had been able to gain over a much longer time occupying the highest offices of state.

When the imperial Sacras were sent out to all the major christian hierarchs summmoning them to attend at Ephesus at Pentecost, the following year, both Nestorius and Cyril knew that matters had taken a turn that could be detrimental to both of them. The copy of the letter which Theodosius sent with Cyril's personal Sacra was hostile in tone. It probably served to warn Cyril that not only was the Emperor annoyed at his appeal to the Empresses, but that plans to move against him juridically might still be a real possibility. Indeed from the winter of 430 onwards Nestorius had seized on the Twelve Chapters as his life-line, depicting them to the court and the Antiochene patriarchate alike as a revival of Apollinarism.

Nestorius lost no time in communicating them to his most able colleagues in the oriental churches, Andrew of Samosata, and Theodoret of Cyr. They too were of the opinion that Cyril had wrongly overstated his case on the monosubjectivity of the divine person in the incarnation, and both of them independently set to work composing a detailed

refutation and exposure of Cyril.[93] The quality of their work was more considered than that of Nestorius himself, and in the course of answering their more advanced theological criticisms Cyril was himself to gain a deeper understanding of the ramifications of the christological argument than ever he would have achieved having merely Nestorius as his intellectual foil.

Andrew of Samosata robustly accused Cyril (quite wrongly in terms of his reading of the evidence) of the profoundly Apollonarist belief that Christ's flesh was not of real, human, derivation. Theodoret's accusations were often more diffuse, but in the course of their attacks both orientals made substantial advances on the earlier Antiochene theology as represented by Theodore Mopsuestia (and now seemingly being restated by Nestorius). These changes in position were not immediately recognised at the time of the conflict, but they marked a significant concession on the part of the Antiochenes to some of the essential points Cyril was trying to secure. In the aftermath of the council of Ephesus, particularly in his letters to Eulogius, Cyril is able to state that he can now distinguish between the correct intention of the orientals in general to secure a single-subject Christology, and what he still sees as the heretical dubiousness of Nestorius on this point. Even after his recognition of the orientals' substantial orthodoxy he makes it clear to Eulogius that he would not use their language by preference, but cannot any longer agree to reject it on principle.[94] Andrew of Samostata, for example, when he turns from a misrepresentation of Cyril's version of the unity of subject in Christ and attempts to describe it on his own terms argues that we must discount the view that Jesus could be seen as a pre-eminent saint, and he speaks of the worship that is due to one single Son. Theodoret, in his turn, interprets the phrase 'God assumed man' as meaning God assumed manhood, the human state, rather than an individual man in any adoptionist sense. This is the neo-Antiochene position that resulted from, or was at least clarified by, the clash with Cyril, and it represents a considerable distancing of christological opinion from that of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore Mopsuestia even though this was never publicly admitted. Such clarifications, which Cyril had been pressing to receive from Nestorius and had not, in the years after the council of Ephesus

[93] cf. Mahé (1906).

[94] In the Letter to Eulogius he puts it (para.3.) as follows: 'The Orientals confessed these things even if they were somewhat obscure in their terminology. . . . This is not what Nestorius does . . .'

were to form the basis of the rapprochement of the Alexandrian and Antiochene theological traditions that was to lead into the Chalcedonian council of 451 and beyond. But for the moment, as the storm clouds gathered in the late winter of 430, no-one was currently thinking of rapprochement.

Cyril buried himself in further writing between December 430 and May 431. He composed replies to both refutations of the orientals, once he had received them, that became his treatises, Response To The Orientals, and To Euoptus (Against Theodoret). In both works he denied and disproved the accusations of Apollinarism in his theology. Then, as now, many people cried 'Apollinarism' against him without quite understanding what this meant: some even to the point of thinking that one was Apollinarist if one believed in the singleness of subject in the incarnate Lord. So, as a first premise, Cyril tried to define the nature of the heresy being attributed to him. He described the Apollinarist error as resting upon two main tenets both of which he was determined to demonstrate he abhorred and had denied in his own work; the first was that the manhood of the Saviour was devoid of a soul, that is mindless (without Nous) or lacking its own rational life-principle and thus merely an automaton of the deity; the second was that the flesh of Christ was 'heavenly' that is not like other human bodies but, as it were, a different entity of 'divine flesh'.[95] Here Cyril knew that he was on safe ground for he had consistently denigrated such positions in his earlier work. His problem was how to demonstrate his own theological conception so as to differentiate it clearly from sounding like an Apollinarist theory.

He decided to turn the argument back to its positive aspect and in his reply to the orientals posed as the key theological issue that underlay the whole argument the question whether Jesus should be properly and distinctly (idikōs) viewed as a human individual (a Jewish man) or whether he was the divine Son in person (God). His apologetic riposte was not wholly satisfactory. He was to realize at Ephesus, six months later, that he still had not done enough to disarm his most vociferous critics, and that the problem lay in the clarity and consistency of his use of his own chosen technical terms to describe his christology.

Some key issues in the argument still needed several more years

[95] The appeal to the concept of 'heavenly flesh', generally alluding to 1 Cor.15.47 as a key proof text, was a graphic way of synopsising the Apollinarist understanding of the Krasis or fusion of the divine and human natures in Christ to form a new 'mixture' of a newly constituted single nature.

to reach a better resolution, in particular the way in which the manner or mode of union of the divine and human in Christ could fruitfully be articulated. The orientals accused Cyril either of having muddied it so much as to make the relative attribution of qualities break down into extreme, impossible, or unfitting paradoxes such as 'the death of God', or 'God's sorrowing tears' (which they felt to be tantamount to mythical paganism), or of having so absorbed the reality of Christ's manhood into the power of the active deity of the Logos that the manhood became merely a symbolic cipher involved in the divine act of redemption, rather than a primary instrument of that redemption. In trying to answer these two key criticisms Cyril's thought reached a new intensity of focus. In essence he rejected the first, but qualified the second. The 'unfitting paradoxes' which his opponents saw were for him the power and point of the incarnation, made comprehensible only as the wonderful humility of the God who abased himself for our sake. He would not give ground on this point at all. As to the second objection, he accepted that the humanity was not a cipher but a primary instrument of redemption, and tried to re-articulate why his understanding of the incarnation did not involve the annihilation of humanity in Christ, rather its enhancement. The process of this intellectual war will be further discussed when we subsequently consider Cyril's theology on its own terms.

Once Cyril felt that his central point of single-subjectivity in Christ had been secured, he showed himself willing to give ground, but in the Spring of 431 he certainly did not feel that such an admission had clearly been gained either from Nestorius or from the oriental theologians. Probably in a growing state of alarm he wrote to Pope Celestine, somewhat desperately, to raise the query whether their mutual synodical condemnation of Nestorius should stand, despite the imperial convocation of an oecumenical synod subsequent to it. If the Pope supported him, Cyril could have a canonical right to insist that Nestorius could not appear at the Ephesian synod except as a defendant. This would not only secure his own case, at least symbolically, in advance of the council, but it would also debar Nestorius from raising any canonical charges against Cyril himself. Someone being formally arraigned could not legally impeach his accuser or judges at the same trial. It was a clever manoeuvre, but one that he could not be sure would work. It was clear, in the face of the impending oecumenical synod, that the higher ecclesiastical court would, *de iure*, be able to review and reconsider all the issues afresh, however

much Rome and Alexandria might protest that the issue had already been finally decided. Pope Celestine seems to have had no illusions on this score. While Cyril's letter to him has not survived, the Pope's response to it on May 7th 431 has, and in it he advises the necessity of moderation and discretion so that Nestorius may be won back.

Unknown to Cyril Celestine composed another letter on the following day addressed to the Emperor Theodosius, but only to be delivered in certain circumstances. He sealed this and proceeded to arrange, with the Archdeacon Leo, the delegation that would represent Rome at the forthcoming council. It was to consist of the bishops Arcadius and Projectus and the priest Philip who seems to have been a member of the Roman chancery.[96] The delegates were instructed to follow the line and tenor of Cyril's lead but on no account were they to become embroiled in the controversies between opposing parties. On the contrary they were to stand apart and adjudicate as befits judges. Since the only foreseeable controversy 'between parties' could be that between the Alexandrian and Antiochene camps, it is interesting to discern in the Pope's instructions a certain desire to distance himself now from the carte blanche he had given to the Alexandrian Patriarch in the preceding Autumn.

The sealed letter was another indication of Celestine's political distancing. If Cyril won the day at Ephesus, the papal legates were instructed to travel on with him to Constantinople and present the secret letter to the Emperor. In this the Pope insisted on the right of bishops to determine the true faith, and requested that the Emperor should sanction what the council had decided, and what he himself had already determined in advance of it. On the other hand, if Cyril lost the day, the papal legates were to stay with him at Ephesus and reconsider their position after consultation.

For all Celestine's careful planning he could not possibly have foreseen the actual diplomatic chaos that would ensue. His letters clearly presume that Nestorius' position will be rejected at Ephesus, but he had sufficient doubts as to the fate of Cyril to make him want to secure his own position independently.

Theodosius had set the council to begin at Ephesus on Pentecost

[96] In the early sessions of the council at which the Romans were present it is Philip who evidently carries the authority to speak, but as time wore on and the Pope's original directions became less relevant, the bishops reassert their independent judgement and he fades from the scene. Doubtless they were encouraged in this policy by Cyril as well as the sight of the eastern synodical process in full spate.

of 431, which was to fall that year on June 7th. He appointed Count Candidianus, head of his own Palace Guard, to supervise the synod and ensure that good order was kept in the city. It is difficult to determine whether Candidian was as neutral a figure from the outset as many have supposed, and only turned against Cyril after the proceedings had started. In retrospect (and it was certainly the complaint of the Cyrilline party at large), Candidian's actions showed a constant bias in favour of Nestorius and his rapid alliance with his friend and colleague Count Irenaeus (who was in personal attendance on Nestorius) makes his neutrality at least suspect. Perhaps Theodosius' choice of a sympathetic military presence was designed to offset his concession to those who had urged him to site the meeting in Asia Minor.

Candidian's primary instructions were to clear out monks and lay people coming to Ephesus out of curiosity, that is to ensure that the bishops engaged in dialogue and heard one another out, without resorting to popular or monastic factions to settle the arguments more robustly. He was ordered to stop any bishop leaving the council prematurely, trying to appeal personally to the Imperial court. Theodosius was determined that the bishops should be held together long enough until they had resolved the entire issue definitively.

Following the religious policy laid down by the founder of his house, Theodosius I,[97] he insisted that Candidian should not intervene or involve himself in the theological proceedings themselves, but keep a strict surveillance on the legal processes and see to the good order of the synod as a whole. This instruction not to be involved in the theological discussions was written explicitly into Candidian's personal Sacra, the very one that had to be read out publicly at the start of the whole legal processes. It was to prove the fatal flaw of the best laid plans of the Emperor. Dvornik has shown[98] how synodical procedure from the earliest days of the Byzantine Empire was based upon the Senatorial model, and this seems to have been Theodosius' image and expectation of his oecumenical council. The separation of state legal prescript, however, and ecclesiastical canonical precedents (issues such as which see had the right to precedence and chairmanship of the proceedings) were far too complicated to have been

[97] For interesting parallels between this and the policy of military supervision at the Council of Constantinople I in 381, convoked by Theodosius the Great, see Ep.136 of St. Gregory Nazianzen. PG 37. 232.

[98] (1934), (1966).

theoretically divided out in such a crude way as Theodosius does. Candidian's task had been made impossible even before he left the imperial city with his detachment of troops. Subsequent events were to prove this only too clearly.

Now, in the late Spring of 431, feverish activities were being made across the christian world, from Persia to Carthage, for the great journey to Asia Minor and all the hardships it would impose. More involved than anyone else were the Archbishops of Constantinople and Alexandria who presumed they would meet face to face, for the first time, after such hard exchanges of words.

3. A Year of Intrigues: The Council of Ephesus, 431

The Emperor had designed the Council, as outlined in his Sacra,[99] so that each metropolitan bishop throughout the provinces would attend and bring with him some of his more distinguished suffragans. The discussions he must have had with Nestorius over the issues at stake, and his subsequent receipt of Cyril's weighty treatises, including the De Recta Fide, had served to impress him with the complexity of the theological issues that needed resolution. His stated intention, to reserve personal matters of the judgement of bishops to the supreme court at Constantinople for the whole duration of the conciliar proceedings, was evidently designed as an attempt to focus the agenda of the bishops strictly on to the christological problem. It manifests his unwillingness at this stage to pursue Nestorius' policy of prosecuting Cyril on the basis of complaints received. Theodosius was also sufficiently impressed by the preliminary arguments he had so far heard as to give Count Candidian strict instructions not to get involved in the theological proceedings.

Theodosius' arguments in this case were, like much else he did, admirable in theory but easily subverted in practice. Like many other paper preparations for important and volatile meetings, the imperial design theory was to bear little relationship to the reality that was now to unfold. The first vague instruction in the Sacra, to bring only eminent suffragans, was interpreted with wide variations in the different provinces. John of Antioch's province of Syria was an incredibly vast ecclesiastical territory in geographical extent. The christian bishops of Persia and parts of Arabia even looked to him as their titular

[99] cf ACO 1.1.114–116.

spokesman, and the physical geography of the territory in question meant that delegations would have to be gathered by dromedary caravans from the deserts, and pack trains through and across the mountains. John began the lengthy process of alerting this great and diverse constituency, and of gathering in his delegates.

From the issue of the Sacra on November 19th 430, to the proposed opening of the council at Pentecost (June 7th 431), there was precious little time for the Syrians to get organised, especially (as John was later to complain) when the invitation itself was considerably delayed in its arrival from Constantinople. John's central party was to include Theodoret whom he would rely on to match Cyril in intellectual debate. Andrew of Samosata was not in attendance at Ephesus but the work of both he and Theodoret, in the previous year, had been explained to the oriental bishops when they assembled in synod at Antioch before setting out on their journey. For the rest, John restricted his representatives to his metropolitan archbishops alone who were each allowed to bring with them no more than two suffragan bishops. This ensured a wide representation of the Syrian churches while only requiring a relatively modest number to brave the hardships of the long overland journey from Antioch to Ephesus. When he subsequently held his separate meeting of delegates at Ephesus, even with the support of several of Nestorius' party, his voting list could only stretch to 43.[100]

Nestorius similarly followed the instructions of the Sacra fairly closely. Aware that the theological heavyweights would be arriving in the Syrian delegation he gathered a party from the immediate region of Constantinople of only sixteen bishops. Socrates describes him as arriving at Ephesus with 'a large number of armed guards',[101] but the remark needs to be treated with great caution. There can be little doubt that he arrived in Ephesus, as Archbishop of the imperial city, in the company of the detachment of troops sent out under the command of Count Candidian. These were not exactly his own bodyguard. As events subsequently unfolded they came to be closely associated with him as Candidian's neutrality was more and more abandoned, and this version of events, dating from many months after the council itself, must have become the standard perception which reached Socrates. From the first days Nestorius' personal bodyguard was provided by his friend Count Irenaeus. This was a determined

[100] cf. ACO 1.5.119–124.
[101] Hist. Eccl.7.34. PG.67.813.

and important military factor. No Byzantine aristocrat would have travelled across the provinces without a skilled military force at his disposal, but despite the fact that it would have included all the servants who were to look after the needs of the party in their time at Ephesus, its size cannot have been particularly large. Theodosius had allowed Irenaeus to attend on Nestorius, doubtless aware that this would ensure the personal safety of his Archbishop, but he was forbidden to involve himself in the conciliar proceedings. The subsequent alliance of Candidian's soldiery with the personal retinue of Irenaeus had a decided influence on events in Ephesus despite all Theodosius' pious, and somewhat naive, intentions expressed in his Sacra. On the day that Nestorius arrived in Ephesus, in the company of the complete imperial guard, along with his personal retinue, it must have seemed to the local church there that he had brought with him a small number of bishops who were insignificant in comparison to the numbers of troops. It was taken by some as a sign of his policy for the forthcoming council.

Memnon, the Metropolitan archbishop of Ephesus, drew in almost the full extent of his Asian[102] suffragans for what was, for them, a local council. He was thus able to summon a group of forty hierarchs and a further twelve from neighbouring Pamphylia. He was to be Cyril's closest ally, politically as well as theologically, at the forthcoming council. Memnon was also able to count on the fervent and unquestioned loyalty of the local people of the province, who looked to him as their leader with far more immediacy than the imperial troops who claimed a somewhat distant authority for their mandate. Memnon was a power to reckon with, and in the face of the imperial troops commanded a great reservoir of popular factions that was more than capable of balancing them out if it came to a test of strength. This remained so even after Candidian, in his alarm at the political climate of the city, had drafted in the emergency reinforcements of a local garrison.

As for Egypt, the imperial instruction to assemble mainly metropolitan bishops had little relevance there from the start. The great expanse of the Alexandrian patriarchate ecclesiastically mirrored the political reality of the country—that there was one great city alone, and that was Alexandria, with a vast hinterland of small, sometimes tiny, local churches with village bishops. Cyril accordingly assembled

[102] ie. The Roman Province of Asia Minor, largely covered by present day Turkey.

his delegation from among his suffragans in a similar way to Memnon. He brought together fifty Egyptian hierarchs, representing about one half of the Egyptian sees. There is no doubt that he was determined to be secure in the voting. Several commentators have accused Cyril of bringing with him a riotous assembly of sailors, parabalani, monks and assorted villains to threaten the peace of Ephesus. Frequently they have attributed to him all the civil disturbances that took place during the council, but there is little justification for this, and even less if we separate out Memnon's role from that of Cyril. The orientals are quite clear that it was Memnon whom they wanted to accuse of fomenting civil unrest. In a letter now only extant in Coptic[103] Cyril justifies himself by oath exactly on this point as he writes back home to Alexandria from his imprisonment at Ephesus: 'Since now, indeed, I know that some have written to Constantinople about my character, that I have brought with me from Alexandria a crowd of reckless fellows, and ships loaded with grain,[104] and they have brought forward many other slanders against me, for this reason it was necessary for me to inform your Piety also about this matter, to the effect that neither has any reckless fellow at all followed me, nor have we brought a single measure of grain. God is my witness . . . we are here each isolated with only two attendants and the necessary clerics who look after us in a fitting way.' The text slightly fudges the issue of how many monks were in attendance, refusing to call them 'reckless fellows' and insisting they were 'clerics', but the point still stands that there is no hard evidence to suggest Cyril brought with him the 'army' that he is often depicted as being able to call on in Ephesus. The relative ease with which Nestorius' lay adherents were able to cut off the supplies and communications of the much larger Cyrilline majority gives the lie to this version of relative political strengths.

Cyril's party of bishops came to Ephesus by sea, following the path of the established corn-route from Alexandria to Constantinople. This traversed the islands up the coast of Asia Minor. Cyril travelled in the same ship as the thaumaturg Shenoude, and his senior hierarchs. A severe storm seemingly made it a trying passage, and writing back to his church from Rhodes where they had taken shelter he describes the adventures.[105] When they finally arrived in Ephesus they assembled

[103] Ep. 108, ET. McEnerney. (1987) pp. 172–174.
[104] As bribes.
[105] Ep. 20. ACO.1.1.1. p. 116; E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 98–99.

into a triumphant procession including all the bishops, monks, and sailors who had navigated them, and made their way into the city to a warm welcome provided by Memnon. Nestorius must have had great cause for misgiving; from the moment of his arrival the local bishop had refused to communicate with him, and barred his churches to him, treating him like a canonical defendant (as he technically was since the Roman synod had found against him) who had to be heard in council before he could be rehabilitated. On Cyril's arrival this was the policy the latter also adopted. Not once did the two great rivals exchange a word face to face in all the time they were together in the city of Ephesus. By contrast Cyril was made welcome at Ephesus by the local clergy as a highly important visiting dignitary.

The representation of the Western church was to be minimal. Apart from the papal delegation of Bishops Arcadius and Projectus and the priest Philip, Italy was unrepresented. Even this delegation did not physically arrive until early July when the main drama of the council had been acted out. The ancient sees of Africa were in the throes of the Vandal invasion, and the Imperial military cause was not going at all well. Transport from town to town was dangerous, taking ship across the Mediterranean almost an impossibility. Only one messenger was sent, the deacon Bessula who came to represent Bishop Capreolus of Carthage, the primatial see of Africa. He brought news of Augustine's death along with a general letter that urged the assembled bishops to allow no innovation in the faith—a vague letter which Cyril was to interpret as Africa's endorsement of conciliar proceedings. Apart from the symbolic value of the papal support for Cyril, Western influence at this council was to count for very little indeed. Flavius of Philippi and the Macedonian delegation were the most westerly provinces represented in the actual conciliar debates. These were staunchly on Cyril's side.

The council had been called by Theodosius to open on Pentecost Sunday, June 7th. Nestorius and his sixteen bishops were the first party of visitors to arrive in Ephesus. They came in good time in advance of the date, and were followed by Cyril and the Alexandrians who arrived only a few days before Pentecost. There was no sign, however, of the Antiochene or Roman delegates. The bishops of Palestine, led by Juvenal of Jerusalem, amounted to sixteen in all, and when they arrived a week later on June 12th they immediately aligned themselves with the parties of Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus. Flavian of Philippi arrived at the same time. The latter took a leading

role in the operation of the synodical proceedings and became a close ally of Cyril. The fact that Memnon had publicly closed the churches to Nestorius, refusing to allow him the right to celebrate any service of prayers or liturgy until his case had been reviewed by the council, must have brought home to Nestorius that his hopes to make the meeting a judicial review of Cyril were no longer a political reality. Memnon was undoubtedly hostile to all that Nestorius stood for, but his closure of the churches to him was in strict accordance with ecclesiastical protocol once the result of the Roman synod had been publicly notified, and the further one came away from Constantinople the more did ecclesiastical precedent weigh more heavily than current imperial policy. It was a lesson that was imposing itself ever more urgently on Nestorius. The growing weight of numbers of the assembled bishops, and the clear signs of an early alignment with Cyril, must also have given him cause for disquiet. Still there was no sign of the Syrian delegation.

John of Antioch had been preparing his delegates for the theological issues they would be required to adjudicate at Ephesus. The land journey from Antioch to Asia Minor would take thirty days under normal conditions, given that the bishops could use the facilities of the imperial post stations. But before they had even left Antioch a combination of circumstances conspired to delay them. Theodosius' announcement at Easter that the Council would open at the following Pentecost, by the time it was delivered to John at Antioch, left him insufficient time to organise the gathering of his delegates. John's letter summoning the Syrian bishops[106] allowed twelve days for them to assemble in the Syrian capital. Easter that year was on the 19th April, but in Antiochene custom the feast involved not merely the ceremonies of Holy Week itself, but a solemn octave of liturgical celebrations following. This 'Apodosis' of the feast meant that the Syrians did not set out until April 27th, leaving themselves hardly any margin of time for a feasible Pentecost rendezvous. The journey, once undertaken, proved to be far from the express thirty days passage they might have hoped for. The river Orontes burst its banks in the rains and cut off their intended route, imposing a considerable detour. Sickness among the entourage (and there was a number of aged bishops in the company) hampered their progress, and the death of some of the delegates en route delayed them further. All in all it seems to

[106] Evagrius. Hist. Eccl.1.1.3.

have been a miserable passage, and this goes a large part of the way to explaining John's undiplomatic and unconsidered actions as soon as he arrived in Ephesus only to discover the whole journey had been rendered pointless.

As the heat of June wore on, the general feelings and tensions at Ephesus were running higher and higher. Physically the conditions were uncomfortable for all the visitors. Ephesus had been selected partly as a provincial metropolis large enough to provide for the extraordinary influx of visitors in terms of food and accommodation. The city's agricultural hinterland, and the produce available through the port, were supposed to be able to cope with the great influx but the city's resources were clearly strained considerably by the synod: large numbers of important entourages could not be accommodated indiscriminately, in addition there were the band of accompanying servants, clerics, notaries, and soldiers. Even at the very beginning of the council the long delay caused by the Syrians was beginning to put a strain on all involved. By the end of the synod, several months later, the crisis (exacerbated by the embargo imposed by Cyril's opponents) had reduced many sections of the city to starvation point.

The delay of the Syrians gave the occasion for much lobbying among the bishops already in attendance. Cyril, in another letter home to Alexandria, complains of Nestorius prowling about like Satan sleeplessly 'plotting against the glory of Christ—though he makes no headway'.[107] Cyril lobbied extensively himself, but refused to communicate in any way with Nestorius, a public sign that he regarded the Roman verdict as having already settled the matter in hand. With Memnon and the Palestinian hierarchs he was now able to reckon on the support of at least one hundred and twenty bishops strongly committed to the anti-Nestorian cause.

Similarly Nestorius had gathered a firm group of adherents around him chief among them being the very outspoken Dorotheus of Marcianopolis whom he had earlier used to preach in the Great Church at Constantinople, anathematising all those who used the Theotokos title. The key factors in this immediate prelude to the council were the Syrian delegation (which had a policy, as Cyril already knew, designed to attack his own theology as outlined in the Twelve Chapters)

[107] Ep. 21. ACO. 1.1.1. p. 117; E.T. McEnerney (1987) p. 100. Cyril's reference is to 1 Peter 5.7–9, which very appositely gives an insight into his feelings on the eve of the opening of the council.

and the large number of undecided bishops, sixty or seventy in total[108] who felt, as yet, no need to commit themselves to any party in advance of hearing both sides of the argument. Of these some had no opinion because they had not fully understood the complexity of the issues, others were still trying to finalise their understanding of the controversy, and yet others were simply not prepared to grant Cyril the right to presidency of the council, given his involvement in the dispute, and were waiting for the arrival of John of Antioch to decide the matter of who should take the chair and finalise the agenda.

As there was still no sign of the Syrians, both Cyril's and Nestorius' parties concentrated on changing the minds of the neutrals. It did not take long, however, for the latter to be more and more identified as potentially hostile to Cyril and to Memnon the local hierarch, and this was taken with some umbrage by the Ephesian populace who, like all provincials in ancient cities, had little love for visitors who did not respect their local prestige, especially as it was epitomised in the wishes of their bishop, for them the authentic voice of 'Ephesian' Christianity. The vacillating brethren among the neutral group of bishops were certainly shaken by the hostility they soon began to encounter from the local people, for whom Memnon and Cyril were the heroes of the day. The popular celebrations following the announcement of the deposition of Nestorius after the council's first session cannot wholly be explained by the orchestration of the events by pro-Cyrilline clerics, for the citizens of Ephesus were wholeheartedly behind the propagation of the Theotokos title. For them the defence of the Mother of God was synonymous with upholding the honour of their own city whose christian identity and prestige was inextricably linked with her cult. The church of the Virgin and the tomb of John the Apostle were the chief glories of christian Ephesus, and an essential part of the city's redefinition of identity in the Byzantine period. The Mother of God as patroness would ensure that Ephesus had as glorious a future in the christian oecumene as once it had in its now overshadowed past when it was dedicated to the Mother Goddess, Ephesian Artemis, whose shrine was one of the chief wonders of the ancient world. The great basilica church of the city was dedicated to Mary. This was set aside for the very meetings of the council that was soon to assemble. Devotion to Mary at a popular level was a factor that Nestorius had underestimated in Constantinople. He again seems to

[108] The conciliar lists fluctuate slightly.

have underestimated its impact on the people of Ephesus. His customary style of proposing his arguments half jestingly, as he ridiculed what he saw as the excesses of devotional theology, served only to increase his isolation in the city. What was worse, his highly propositional style of argument not only bamboozled ordinary people, it left many of the bishops (some of whom were definitely illiterate)[109] equally confused and increasingly unfavourable to him.

When marks were daubed, threateningly, on their lodging houses one night, several of this central group of unaligned bishops were sufficiently alarmed as to throw in their lot with Cyril and Memnon's majority forthwith. As the tensions in the city rose, and frustrations increased because of the delay of the Syrians, without news, the growing number of clashes between the various camp-followers (and even some of the bishops themselves who almost came to blows on occasions if Nestorius' later account in the Book of Heraclides is to be accepted) alarmed Count Candidian so much that he drafted in military reinforcements from neighbouring provincial garrisons, to police the city and prevent the delegates from further mutual intimidation.

Two significant events in the theological lobbying occurred during this preliminary period, which can even be regarded as the decisive moment of Nestorius' downfall. They consisted in the public arguments, at Nestorius' lodging house, between himself and his former friend Acacius of Melitene,and another oriental bishop Theodotus of Ancyra. Acacius was a skilled Syrian theologian who had been in communication with Cyril, and was concerned to secure on the part of his oriental colleagues the clear rejection of a double-subject christology. The more he did this the more did tempers start to fray among the Nestorian circle.

Theodotus of Ancyra, another oriental bishop entertained by Nestorius, found the Archbishop's theological style an irritant, in the way he insisted on strict formality of intellectual discourse. Nestorius seems to have regarded Theodotus as a simpleton, and was instructing him,

[109] Theodore, the Bishop of Gadara in Palestine, when he came to sign the condemnation of Nestorius sent his Archdeacon up, who (rather unkindly) drew everyone's attention on the legal paper to the fact that the Bishop 'did not know his letters' (ACO.1.2.63. signature 190). The same bishop however, was one of those who stood up in the course of the debates to give his opinion, quite robustly, that Cyril's letters were undoubtedly pious, and in accordance with Nicene faith, and by implication that those of Nestorius were not ACO 1.2.20.(para.47). He was not one to be refused his say on the faith simply because he had no intellectual qualifications. There must have been many like him, even among those who could sign their names.

as he had done the people in Constantinople over the previous two years, on the necessity of making strict distinctions in language between the human and divine conditions apparent in the incarnation. In the course of this exchange he seems genuinely to have scandalised Theodotus. The incident led to the bishop indignantly abandoning his former colleague, soon to be followed by Acacius.

The public defection of Acacius and Theodotus from Nestorius' camp, and their evidence formally rehearsed in the council's first session, effectively secured Nestorius' condemnation. The latter was certainly loose in his talk, ironically so for one who was always arguing the point of strict logical propriety in theological discourse. When Acacius had pressed him to admit that the unity of subject in the incarnate Christ was secured by seeing the divine Logos as the immediate subject of the incarnate acts, Nestorius countered in his usual way that such a view endangered the sense of the impassibility of the Logos. However, he put his point in a very testy way, evidently an argument *ad hominem* in the heat of the moment, and said to Acacius: 'If it is God the Word, second Person of the Trinity, who is made flesh, then you must confess that the Holy Spirit, and God the Father himself, have equally been made flesh, because the Trinity is threefold but only one in substance'.[110] He obviously meant to ridicule Cyril's position. It is also highly probable that his remark rose out of the specific context of an argument over Cyril's conception of a natural union (mia physis, henosis physike) of the divine and human in Christ which Nestorius took to be nothing more than Apollinarism revisited. Nestorius rejected the possibility of using the category of nature/natural to signify the christological union on the grounds of a strict logical syllogism that will be elaborated more fully later, but can be stated briefly here for the sake of clarification. In his view if a 'natural union' was posited as the basis of Christ's personal integrity then it would be entirely appropriate to ask what was this integral nature that was so attributed? If it was a divine nature, then Christ could not be a man; if it was a human nature then Christ could not be God; and if it was a synthetically combined semi-divine and semi-human nature then such a hybrid could neither claim to be God nor man. In short by this trinitarian test case Nestorius was demanding that Cyril clarify his understanding of the manner of the christological union, accusing him in the process of a teaching that was heretical in its implications.

[110] ACO 1.2. p. 38. which gives Theodotus' and Acacius' evidence.

Nonetheless, whatever the sophistication of his intentions, his stark *reductio ad absurdum*, 'If God the Word became flesh then all the Trinity must have become flesh since the Trinity is bound together as one nature' sounded in the popular forum (both at street level and in the conciliar chamber where it was cited as evidence of his present state of mind since he would not attend to speak in his own defence) as capable of bearing only two possible interpretations. The first was that the Archbishop of Constantinople was theologically illiterate: did he, for example, really think that all the acts of the incarnation had to be referred to the eternal life of the Trinity? This would be a revival of the crassest form of pagan Hellenistic myth. The second possibility was that he knew this statement was an absurdity, and thus to avoid it was arguing simply that the one who became incarnate was not the Word of God, and therefore could only be a man. This was widely recognised as the heresy of Paul of Samosata condemned in the Third Century, and the very heresy which his own clergy had formally accused him of holding.

The high probability that Nestorius only meant to ridicule the Cyrilline thesis of the 'natural union' as a viable model for christology, not to deny the divinity of the Saviour which most christian parties in the fifth century held as axiomatic to the faith, should not blind us to the evident fact that Nestorius' language frequently betrayed him, as not having thought through the ramifications of all that he said. This was Cyril's own point in reply to Nestorius' accusations, that the implications of his opponent's teachings simply did not correspond to the oecumenically perceived faith of the church; that is the christian people at large. Cyril primarily understood this to be the Apostolic tradition, or 'paradosis', as can be exemplified by his constant reference to prior patristic argumentation, but there was a profound echo to his stance in the importance fifth century Byzantine political and religious life attached to the 'Voces Populi'. The popular acclaim (or disapproval) that greeted the policies of Emperors or other civic and religious leaders was not a factor that could be safely ignored. Much later, after the council, when Theodosius was vacillating over what position to take, such a popular demonstration in the imperial city when the crowds protested against Nestorius, more than decided the Emperor to abandon him to his fate, and sign a decree of exile. While he had been in office in the imperial city Nestorius had attempted to ride over the local opposition, here in Ephesus he found it much harder to do so.

Acacius of Melitene also gave witness on the same occasion in the Ephesian council that one or two days after the incident with Theodotus of Ancyra he was again engaged in the theological discussions held in Nestorius' lodgings when one of his accompanying bishops (he is not named but one suspects Dorotheus of Marcianopolis) gave a discourse that argued for Diodore of Tarsus' christology of Two Sons. Acacius told the assembled synod that at this point he walked out from Nestorius' lodging house and refused to attend any further meetings. Here was a question of guilt by association, and it was widely presumed that behind all the complexities and obscurities of Nestorius' teachings was a simple reversion to the position of Diodore which had been rebutted by no less an authority than Gregory of Nazianzen two generations earlier.

The remarks of Nestorius to Theodotus of Ancyra further illustrate how effectively he was alienating the middle ground of bishops at Ephesus by this series of meetings in advance of the council. When Theodotus was asked to explain the whole story of how he had been scandalised, a large number of the bishops assembled in council identified with him, and were indignant at Nestorius' arrogance. It appeared that on the 18th of June Nestorius lost patience with Theodotus in explaining his position on the basic rules of theological discourse as he understood them—on why the title of God ought to be reserved for the acts proper to the Logos, why the title of 'Jesus' ought to be reserved to the acts proper to the human being (such as Jesus eating, drinking, and so forth), and why the titles 'Christ', 'Lord', or 'Son', ought to be reserved to signify the sphere of concerted action. To what appears to have been Theodotus' appeal for a simpler answer as to what was wrong with the straightforward confession of Jesus as God, Nestorius replied impatiently: 'We must not call the one who became man for us, God'. He decided to press his point home, that language about the incarnate Lord had to observe strict rules if it was to avoid foolish incongruities,[111] and compounded his difficulties by telling the shocked Theodotus: 'I refuse to acknowledge as God, an infant of two or three months old.' Once again we can interpret Nestorius' primary intention here as the application of rhetoric to ridicule his opponent's theology, in so far as the Alexandrian tradition habitually applied paradoxes in incarnational discourse to heighten

[111] Cyril's description of this attitude, in his conciliar report to the Emperor, describes Nestorius' behaviour as 'the mockery of our august and divine mystery'. ACO 1.3.3–5. (Gesta Ephesina Doc.81. para.6.).

the sense of the divine condescension in the incarnation, paradoxes such as the 'swaddling bands of God', as had been traditionally used in theological discourse for a considerable time. However, his apparent meaning was all too starkly clear to Theodotus and the assembled bishops who later heard the account—the baby of two months old, Jesus of Nazareth, was not God. Although it was not his explicit intention to say so, Nestorius' peculiarly rigid scheme of permissible language about christology was popularly heard to be no less than a denial of the deity of Christ.

The out and out defection of Acacius and Theodotus brought about a swell of feeling in the Cyrilline majority that would tolerate no further delay. John of Antioch had been awaited for 11 days after Pentecost by this stage, but when he was more than a fortnight overdue Cyril began to suspect that his slowness might be a diplomatic one. The suspicion was, of course, in Cyril's favour, but there are grounds for not dismissing it entirely out of hand as simply the wishful thinking of a political manipulator. Cyril notes two main points in his justification to the Emperor of why he opened the proceedings without John. The first is the pressure placed upon him by bishops who were growing weary of being cooped up in Ephesus in high summer. 'Some of the holy bishops', he says, 'suffering from their advanced years could no longer bear to stay in this foreign place, others were seriously ill with diseases, others indeed ended their life in the metropolis of Ephesus'.[112] In short, he advances as his reasons for beginning the synod the selfsame reasons John had submitted[113] to explain why he should not have done so. The second gives a very strong hint (explicated more fully in the letter the council sent on the same occasion to Pope Celestine) as to his suspicions of John's motives in his delay. Cyril notes how other bishops coming from further afield than John had arrived in Ephesus on the morning of June 21st. Chief among them were the definitely anti-Cyrilline theologians Alexander of Apamea and Alexander of Hierapolis. His point seems to be that if John had sent these on ahead, then it only meant that if he himself had wished to be present he could have been. The deduction is perfectly accurate.

In the letter he sent ahead of him, in the hands of this Syrian advance party, John indicated that they were still five or six stages

[112] ACO 1.3.3–5. Doc. 81, para.2.

[113] The Syrian bishops were aged, weary, sick, and some had died, and thus the delay was legitimate. Cyril, by using the selfsame arguments, countered that just so was his commencement of the proceedings.

away,[114] at least a week's travel. He expressed his regret for the delay and assured Cyril that he had not taken a moment's break in the last thirty days of hard travelling. His letter is exceptionally warm and cordial in tone, even allowing for the usual rhetorical flourishes. It is by no means certain that John would have supported Nestorius vigorously if he had arrived in other circumstances, especially since in his pre-conciliar correspondence he had urged him to compromise and moderate his language. For John, as can be clearly discerned in the events of the two years following Ephesus, the substantial issues of the rejection of a Two Sons Christology and the admission of the validity of the Theotokos title were already accepted. John's letter to Nestorius, after he had received news of the Roman and Alexandrian synods' condemnations of 430, had even suggested the value of recantation, as Theodore of Mopsuestia, their common teacher, had once recanted on an occasion when he had been formally convicted of error.[115]

Cyril knew, however, that John's Syrian delegation would take its lead from Theodoret of Cyr, and he already had more than enough evidence to assure him that his own Twelve Chapters were going to be the prime object of the latter's attack. Theodoret had arrived in Ephesus in good time and was already making noises about the Chapters' orthodoxy. It was at this critical juncture that a highly controverted exchange took place.

Although there is no trace of it in the formal letter of John, Cyril maintained both in his synodical report to the Emperor, and in the formal report to Pope Celestine[116] that John of Antioch sent a verbal communication by Alexander of Apamea and Alexander of Hierapolis that Cyril ought to 'proceed with business if he were further delayed'. The fact that John took care to leave it out of his formal letter is interesting (it was a legal requirement imposed on all parties by the Emperor's Sacra to be in attendance by Pentecost and accordingly an illegal act to be seen to be intentionally avoiding this duty). There are no good grounds at all for doubting the authenticity of this message. Cyril would not have made this claim, twice, in formal reports, if he could not substantiate it in the presence of several witnesses, and he tells the Pope that the two Alexanders indicated not once, but

[114] ACO 1.1.119.
[115] ACO 1.1.93–95. paras.3–4.
[116] ACO 1.3.3–5 para.3; ACO 1.3.5–9. paras.3–4.

several times, that John had instructed them to inform Cyril that if he arrived 'late' he should delay the council no longer but proceed 'with what has to be done'.

Nonetheless, when Cyril and Memnon took them at face value and began the proceedings, both Alexanders were completely furious and protested at the action. It would seem, then, that while John certainly did send such a message what he probably meant was that Cyril should open the council if he was delayed any more than the extra week he could see that he would need to bring the Syrian entourage altogether into Ephesus. For Cyril, however, a crucial impasse had been resolved, and that was the lingering doubts over his canonical right to claim the presidency of the assembly. It was enough for him that John had indicated, in principle, that Alexandria had the right to preside—that he should do what had to be done.

John's instructions to his advance party were obscure on two key points; firstly on what constituted further delay, and then on what it was that 'had to be done'. It was certainly a strange message and Cyril's interpretation of it as a face-saving strategem on John's part (so that he would not have to be involved with the deposition of his erstwhile friend) cannot wholly be dismissed as an entirely mischievous exegesis. For Cyril, the verbal message and this lingering behind the advance party was a signal that John had not wished publicly to abandon Nestorius but was not as wholly committed to his defence as Theodoret, and in fact was willing to accede to the principle of his deposition if necessary. The behaviour of the Antiochene party when they subsequently arrived does not do much to dissipate this suspicion, for with the exception of a few hard-line supporters among them, Nestorius soon found that he was not greatly welcomed by the Syrian hierarchy as a whole. Similarly John's own statement at the opening of his separate council, once he had arrived in Ephesus, may give away more than he thought when he said: 'On my part I had hoped to avoid deposing anyone from the priesthood . . .'[117] Cyril put his finger on the reason for the suspected subterfuge in his letter to Celestine where he mentions John's problems in holding together his patriarchate which had widely differing views on the issues at stake. This was undoubtedly an accurate political assessment of John's unenviable difficulties on the home front.

Cyril's synodical letter to Pope Celestine puts his suspicions of John's

[117] ACO 1.5. 119–124, para.12.

delay much more openly than the script he wrote to the Emperor. This is partly because there was little point making this an explicit charge against John in the letter to be sent to the court when, by the necessities of imperial etiquette and law, John could in no possible sense admit that he had delayed for such motives, and partly because in the synodical letter to Celestine Cyril was aware that he had to justify his action in starting without John on grounds that were more in accord with ecclesiastical precedent and canon. Here he tells Celestine what he thought John was up to: 'The Very Reverend John of Antioch was in default [of the Emperor's command to be present for Pentecost] not by accident or only because the long distance of the voyage had hindered him, but because he concealed in his heart a plan and an intention that was not of God. This became clear soon after, when he arrived at Ephesus. . . . We waited for sixteen whole days while many bishops and clergy became ill, and greatly cast down. Some even died. John's behaviour, as Your Holiness can see, was interpreted as an act of Hubris against the holy council. His culpable delay was so great that other bishops who had even further to travel were arriving before him. Nonetheless, after the sixteenth day of waiting some of his accompanying bishops turned up, the two metropolitans Alexander of Apamea and another Alexander of Hierapolis. When we asked them about the long-delayed arrival of the very Reverend bishop John they told us, not once but several times—John has instructed us to inform Your Piety that if he is any further delayed you should not hold up the council, but rather do what has to be done. And when this was announced it seemed obvious to us that by his slowness and by these messages we were receiving from him he was trying to avoid being involved, either because of his friendship with Nestorius, or because Nestorius had been a cleric of his own church, or because he was under pressure from certain people who were lobbying on his behalf. This was why the council opened its session in the Great Church at Ephesus dedicated to Mary'.[118]

In this great international convocation two closely related, but nonetheless distinct, systems of law were governing procedure in the minds of all the clerical parties in attendance: imperial decree and canonical precedent. It is clear that by June 21st the difficulties of life in Ephesus had made further delays more and more resented by the great majority of bishops in the city. It is equally evident that

[118] ACO 1.3.5–9 paras.3–4, (Ep.ad Celestinum).

Nestorius had signally failed to impress many of the previously unaligned bishops. Cyril, with some justification, sensed that if he could only convoke the council matters could be resolved quickly to his satisfaction. In John's verbal message he had received sufficient moral indication that Syria acknowledged his right to precedence as chairman in the proceedings. Only one thing now stopped him from action.

In the universal understanding of the Byzantine church such a council could only be convoked by the Emperor himself and this was to be done symbolically only by the formal reading of the imperial Sacra to the assembled bishops; the letter of legal constitution in which he also set out his royal intentions and requirements for the meeting. Count Candidian held this, and he had increasingly become alienated from Cyril and Memnon as the days wore on after Pentecost and he sensed the troubling swell of popular power which they commanded even in the face of his troops. He was also annoyed at the way Nestorius had been excluded from the synod from his first arrival in Ephesus. In his interpretation of the Sacra he saw that the Emperor wanted a full and free discussion of all the issues with all the main characters involved. That this ran counter to the canons forbidding deposed clerics to fulfil their ecclesiastical duties until synodically tried did not appear to him to matter. He was made to give ground on the treatment of Nestorius before the council started, but was all the more determined to wait until the arrival of John before permitting the synod to begin.

By the 21st of June this aspect of the royal policy was well enough known. It was also deduced that, in line with the general Theodosian procedure in church affairs, the bishops would be left to decide the matters relating to faith without lay intervention. This deduction was to be proved right, for the Sacra contained explicit instructions to the royal officials not to become involved in the theological debates. The bishops, however, did not simply regard themselves as mere instruments of the imperial will. It is doubtful at any stage in Byzantine history whether the hierarchy as a whole could ever be characterised in such a supine way as this. They saw the definition of the church's faith and canons of good order as supremely their affair, with or without the leave of the Emperor. They also needed no one to remind them that Synodical process pre-dated the christianisation of the royal court by several centuries. In the fifth century it would not be a Constantine who took the presidential chair of a council, but as it had been in the days even before there was a christian Basileus, the senior bishop present.

Accordingly, in the light of the evidence afforded by Acacius of Melitene and Theodotus of Ancyra, and in the knowledge of the considerable episcopal resentment that had accumulated because of John's delay, Cyril decided to act after he had weighed the implications of the Syrian report. He would open the session of the council. It was midsummer's day, the late morning of June 21st 431.

Most of the criticism he has attracted for this action centres round a somewhat 'modern' sense of fair play in democratic process, or gentlemanly behaviour in intellectual argument. The case is often epitomised in highly anachronistic comments to the effect that if both parties (Cyril and Nestorius) had calmly heard one another out they could surely have come to a sensible resolution of their theological differences through compromise. But whether or not this is even an accurate description of how twentieth century university theologians behave with one another (and that is a debatable case) it certainly could not lay any claim to represent patristic procedure. Several contemporary perspectives on the conciliar fathers tend to represent them as 'seeking' the mind of the church through dialogue and enquiry. A forward-looking developmental, or evolutionary view of doctrine is presupposed here, such as that postulated by John Henry Newman in the 19th century and popularised thereafter, but far from current in the patristic understanding of the nature of tradition.

In the Byzantine church the perceived duty of those attending councils was to 'recognise', by comparison with past precedent, the faith of the church, and having recognised it acclaim it in the Spirit. This was the force and role of the numerous episcopal 'acclamations' that one finds within the acts of an ancient council, designed to evoke the way in which the apostles of old had been inspired by the Spirit of God to teach the faith in the orginal Pentecostal enthusiasm. It is an implicit, but nonetheless clear, claim to stand as bishops in the apostolic succession. It was not expected, therefore, that senior hierarchs should have to agonise about what that faith was, or search out its meaning, given that they had lived by it for years and were holding the ecclesiastical office as teachers of the faith. This important context holds true even in those cases, such as the present one, when the matters under discussion were highly complex. It was expected that theologians should articulate positions, but the 'acclamation' of them, by a supposedly unanimous episcopal voice, was the decisive factor. In short an open and neutral enquiry over doctrine that was designed to achieve an internationally acceptable compromise was never in the

minds or expectations of any of those attending the council of Ephesus, except perhaps Nestorius. This concept of the definition of christianity by progressive compromise was, and still is, alien to the Orthodox and Catholic communions who have retained synodical process, but more importantly in the present instance it is an unsuitable standard of assesssment, both historically and ideologically, for the events that constituted ancient conciliar meetings.

If one wishes to assess the rightness or wrongness of Cyril's actions, in their historical context, it is necessary to do so in terms of the canons to which he and the other bishops of all parties felt themselves to be bound. In this case we need to assess Cyril's actions in the light of Imperial law and canonical precedent.

The position, then, was this: to fulfil the requirements of law the council needed the reading of the Sacra to legitimate its session. Count Candidianus who held it was determined to wait for John of Antioch. To fulfil the requirements of the ecclesiastical canons the senior bishop had to be selected as the president. Rome and Alexandria had ranked as the two most important sees from antiquity until the fourth century when the Council of Constantinople had given to New Rome great ecclesiastical status to reflect its position as capital of the Byzantine world, on the occasion of the golden jubilee of its dedication.

In all practical reality Byzantium had long displaced all other cities of the Roman world, but Old Rome clung to her ancient pedigree tenaciously, and no less to her ecclesiastical dignity as the first international focus of canonical discipline the christian world had known after the age of the apostles. Old Rome was determined not to have her ecclesiastical precedence undermined in the same way that her political prestige had been within the last century and a half since Constantine had transferred his capital definitively to the East. The results of the political demotion were symbolically obvious to all, and the population of Rome still bore the physical and mental traumas of merely two decades previously when the barbarians had brought the once proud city to its knees in a humiliating defeat.

Rome had never accepted the validity of the conciliar canons of 381 which displaced Alexandria from the hierarchy of prestige and placed Constantinople in her stead with equal privileges to Old Rome. The canon had the force of imperial law, and in the East, where conciliar theological decrees were never understood as separate from the canons which were allied with them, this ecclesiastical mode of

governance eventually became an accepted fact of life. The decree did not constitute any strictly hierarchical order among the great patriarchates (Antioch, for example, did not automatically rank 'below' Alexandria) rather it clearly signalled that Constantinople's ecclesiastical standing had finally caught up with her political, military, and economic power.

Rome was running against the tide, in a certain sense, by refusing to acknowledge the canons of Constantinople, and the same policy was repeated later as an immediate response when the Council of Chalcedon in 451 reaffirmed the decrees of 381. This position suited the Western Emperor's court (as long as it survived) which shared the Papal aversion to regarding Constantinople as the real centre of world power. Rome made this defence of its traditional right to stand as supreme court of appeal in the face of several difficulties. Firstly it had to run against the increasing prestige that the council of 381 was beginning to attract as the great symbol of Trinitarian orthodoxy. As with its attitude to Chalcedon later, the eastern bishops thought it very odd indeed that Rome could accept the inspired nature of a council's teaching and then refuse to be committed to its disciplinary canons which were also considered divinely authoritative. Secondly, it had to run against the tide of the increasingly powerful political principle that a church's territorial jurisdiction, within the single imperium of God's christian people, should be co-terminous with civil boundaries and divisions. For some of these reasons Pope Celestine had regarded Cyril of Alexandria almost as his church's 'deputy', and while it was a role that Cyril never explicitly accepted or even acted upon, it was not one that he disclaimed either, as long as he felt it could strengthen his hand against Nestorius.

Cyril and Celestine were presuming, on the basis of ancient tradition, that Rome would have the right to presidency of an international synod, and in Rome's absence, Alexandria. Nestorius was clearly presuming that in line with the canons of 381 it would be Constantinople which would preside whoever attended. The conciliar canons, however, also forbade any condemned bishop from assuming any sacerdotal role until another synod had heard his case and cleared him. Nestorius had presumed that since Theodosius had overruled, in 430, the synods of Rome and Alexandria which had excommunicated him, then their canonical status was rendered void by the act. Legally this was so in the eyes of the imperial court. It was not universally understood to be the case in the eyes of many bishops, not least among them

Memnon of Ephesus, Cyril, Celestine, and the Macedonians. The canonical censure from two major sees that hung around Nestorius from the moment of his arrival at Ephesus counted against him and fatally compromised his claims for the presidential chair. This, and the absence of the Roman delegation, left Cyril next in line for consideration for the presidency besides John of Antioch.

Several of the Easterners, especially Nestorius, Andrew of Samosata, Theodoret, and Alexander of Hierapolis, regarded it as a task of the council to try Cyril for suspected Apollinarism. Cyril, while dismissing the charges contemptuously, had thought it wise to begin to answer them in writing even before the council opened. More importantly, as a skilled church politician Cyril knew that no such charge had been formally proposed, sustained, or delivered against him in any proper canonical forum. The preliminary meeting that John of Antioch had called before his delegation set off for Asia Minor had discussed the issue as a charge of Theodoret's but the imperial summons to Ephesus had pre-empted them from making that meeting into a separate synodical trial. No synod had moved against Cyril from the part of Constantinople either, and given the internal condition of that see within a year of Nestorius' arrival there, with his senior clergy in open revolt against him, it would have been a very unwise thing to have tried anything like it.

Moreover, all the official communications Cyril had received from Antioch had been cordial in tone, and he may even have known that John had been urging Nestorius to change his position while not suggesting the same to him. The most recent of all the letters from John to Cyril which had arrived in Ephesus on that morning of June 21st had even suggested the latter should proceed if John was delayed—surely a tacit acceptance of Cyril's ecclesiastical right of precedence? Not only was there no canonical charge to debar him from claiming the presidency of the synod, Cyril could now cite the acceptance of his right to proceed as given to him by Juvenal of Jerusalem, Celestine of Rome, John of Antioch (implicitly), and Memnon the local hierarch. Add to this Cyril's international reputation as scholar and theologian and it must be apparent that he was regarded as the natural leader of the council by the great majority of those assembled. Apart from his own seniority and the canonical debarment of Nestorius Cyril also had another card up his sleeve—and that was Celestine's letter asking him to represent the interests of the Roman church in the prosecution of Nestorius' heresy, which it felt should

not be re-examined except to condemn it afresh. Even if Cyril had allowed Nestorius' right to attend the council as an equal delegate (as the Emperor had intended), instead of as a canonically deprived defendant, he could still claim the canonical right to the presidency of the assembly. As it was, he found he did not need to abandon his first position (which had refused Nestorius the right to attend the synod other than as a defendant) because this was widely accepted by the other bishops at Ephesus.

When he heard the reports from the Syrians, therefore, Cyril could only have felt that the pieces of the jigsaw had finally come together. All that legally stood in his way from summoning the council to decisive action (when for all the world it looked as if it would disintegrate before ever getting started) was the imperial representative Count Candidian. Cyril was one of the few hierarchs present at Ephesus who had long experience of dealing with even more powerful Byzantine noblemen than this—as all three imperial aristocrats at Ephesus, Counts Candidian, Irenaeus, and later Count John, each found to their annoyance.

On June 21st Cyril was no longer prepared to allow the military to determine the form of the council, and now that he felt absoutely sure of his ecclesiastical grounds, he decided to test his civil right, on the premise (which turned out to be correct) that the Emperor would follow the traditional religious policy of his Dynasty, allowing the bishops the full determination of the religious arguments without the interference of the court aristocracy. Accordingly he cast the die and, with the agreement of the senior hierarchs that comprised his majority, announced the beginning of the council that same afternoon of Sunday June 21st 431, and sent round formal summons to attendance.

Cyril could count, at that time, on at least 155 signatories, including the Deacon Bessula as representative of Capreolus of Carthage, plus two other proxies, Celestine of Rome, and Rufus of Thessalonike, taking his command of the initial vote to 157. He could also cite the presence of Constantinople (the attendant bishops who had come with Nestorius) Alexandria, Jerusalem, the presence by proxy of Rome, and the most recent agreement to begin sent by an advance group of delegates from the last remaining great see of Antioch. By the time of the final hours of the first session of the council, which confirmed Nestorius' deposition, Cyril would be able to demonstrate 198 episcopal signatures agreeing to Nestorius' anathematisation, and other proxy

votes which would take the figures to over 200.[119]

When the news broke on that Sunday evening that Cyril was going to open the synod under his own presidency, vigorous protests were immediately lodged against the action by the Syrian delegation and Nestorius' party, and also a group of the still unaligned bishops who were unsure of Cyril's canonical position and preferred to wait for John's arrival, however late that might be. At first this protest group numbered 68 bishops but it deflated in the course of the synodical meeting in the same ratio that Cyril's voting register swelled. Theodoret of Cyr wrote to Cyril from his lodgings that very evening to demand a delay until John arrived, and threatened Cyril with canonical censure if he refused. But Cyr was an obscure and unimportant see in itself, and Cyril did not consider there was any need to reply.

Throughout the later part of that evening and into the night of June 21st final preparations were quickly instigated by bishop Memnon to make the great church ready for the delegates, and throughout the city factional meetings were held. Count Candidian moved quickly from group to group, sounding opinion, and trying to reverse Cyril's decision by appealing to the Emperor's intention that all should be represented. He was looking for a delay of four days, and to support his claim he threatened to nullify anything that was arranged by the synod without the presence of the orientals.

Late that evening Cyril sent a special delegation of four bishops[120] to Nestorius' lodgings to require his presence at the synod on the following morning. They found him in the presence of half a dozen other bishops who supported him, and on hearing the summons they discussed with one another before he replied: 'I will examine the matter and if I ought to come, then I shall come'.[121] Nestorius must have recognised the summons as the first of three solemn commands that constituted the arraignment of a bishop before a synod. His words were not a refusal, neither were they an acceptance. Their import suggests he must have consulted immediately with Counts Candidian and Irenaeus along with his remaining supporters. The busy sequence of events that unfolded that evening and in the early part of the following day are somewhat confused. The version in the Conciliar Acts puts everything into a clear sequential version but leaves

[119] ACO 1.2.3–7 (155 signatories); ACO 1.2.54–64. (over 200 claimed).
[120] Hermogenes of Rhinocourouros, Athanasius of Paralos, Peter of Parembolos, and Paul of Lampa.
[121] ACO 1.3.3–5 para.3; ACO 1.2.9. (Doc. 38.) para.1.

out important aspects. This is partly because of the very nature of the Acts themselves.

Cyril had appointed the Alexandrian priest Peter to act as chief legal notary of the conciliar sessions. It is because of his skill as a legal secretary that we possess such a large body of texts dealing with the proceedings of Ephesus, the first great council whose records have survived in such detail. But the Acts of the Synod are quite obviously, in the main, an Alexandrian composition, and thus not a neutral account (which is not to say they are inaccurate). They present a varied and highly important assembly of crucial evidence. Where they give a report it can generally be relied on as an accurate record, for Cyril was determined from the very outset to have his path secured from every conceivable angle for what he knew without question would be a forthcoming legal hearing at the royal court after the council was ended. They need care in the reading for what they do not say, more than for any doubt over what they do say.

In the end the creation of this strong legal record secured Cyril's personal safety and ultimate success in making the Ephesian synod stand with oecumenical authority. His foresight in this respect was remarkable. When one collates the theological writings that Cyril prepared in advance of the council, the extensive patristic testimonies he had assembled for the first session, the acts of the proceedings themselves, the post-conciliar lobbying he directed from his imprisonment, and the major theological writings he undertook in the aftermath of the council, one can only stand in wonder before his indefatigable energy. In addition, for theological power and political acumen Cyril had no rival to come anywhere near him.

Nonetheless the Acts give a stylised view that glosses over some aspects, particularly how Cyril had duped Count Candidian. Having an eye on a future imperial reader, they are very careful to give the impression of a scrupulous and loyal regard for the Emperor's will, while clearly Cyril's major motivation came from elsewhere, from the ecclesiastical tradition he made it his life's passion to defend.

Taking its cue from the obvious change of tone in Nestorius' responses, between his second summons on the morning of June 22nd, and his antagonistic refusal to receive the third summons in the afternoon of the same day, the following account of the events presumes that the official protest (in person) of Theodoret and Count Candidian took place in the late morning of the 22nd, after the second summons had been delivered from a gathering of bishops already ensconced in the Great Church of St. Mary.

In one sense Cyril had opened the first session of the Council on the morning of June 22nd when the Gospels were solemnly enthroned in the centre of the church,[122] surrounded by the bishops, as the sign of Christ's presence among them as Risen Lord directing their administration. Canon law required three formal summons should be recorded for any bishop who was to be tried before a synod. Accordingly one of the first acts of the day was to decide that Nestorius' invitation of the previous evening could stand as the first summons, evidently refused since he and his party were conspicuously absent.

Flavian of Philippi moved that Nestorius should be summoned a second time by a new delegation of three bishops, this time in the company of a lawyer to witness the act.[123] On their arrival they found that Nestorius' lodgings were thronged with troops. Count Candidian himself was present. The bishops were refused an audience with Nestorius who seems to have been engaged in a meeting of his own. Eventually Candidian appeared to tell them that no audience with the archbishop was possible, although they should wait for further instructions. He later reappeared with some of Nestorius' clergy who gave them the message: 'When all the bishops have been gathered, we will engage in mutual communication'.[124]

The response was ambivalent. It was clearly not a straightforward rebuff, but did it mean he would not appear until John of Antioch arrived, or until he had gathered all the bishops present in Ephesus? for there were 42 of these, apart from his own party of 16, who were still not seated in the church of St. Mary. It seems quite possible he meant the latter, and if this is so, it could be concluded that he actually did attend (by proxy) after the second summons, even though it was only to refuse the legitimacy of the council. In any case his answers demonstrate that Nestorius was being careful to proceed with the due processes of canonical requirement at this stage.

It was probably after the second summons that the purpose of Nestorius' and Count Candidian's deliberations became evident. The group of 68 dissident bishops had been consulted, and with a military guard at their head their delegation progressed to the church to present the formal protest that had been drawn up by Theodoret of Cyr.

[122] The considerable ruins of the building are still visible in Ephesus.

[123] Theodoulos of Elousa in Palestine, Anderios of Chersonese in Crete, Theopemptos of Cabasa in Egypt, and the Notary Epaphroditus, a lector of the church of Rhodes who was present in attendance on his bishop Hellanicos.

[124] ACO 1.2.10. (Doc. 40).

As he had already warned on the previous evening, this insisted that Cyril should delay proceedings and threatened him with canonical sanctions should he refuse.

Cyril knew that his canonical grounds for opening the First Session on June 22nd were defensible, and the renewed objection of the minority bishops was not entertained. Nonetheless he must have been acutely aware that he could claim no legal status for his synod under imperial law until the official reading of the Emperor's Sacra had taken place. Candidian held the copy of this. How Cyril could organise the reading was beyond him until his opponents offered him the resolution of all his technical difficulties at a stroke, and his superior political experience enabled him to seize the advantage once offered.

Candidian and the party of bishops entered the church with a great flourish, and after Theodoret had read his demand, Candidian intervened to demand that all the presently assembled bishops should immediately disperse as they constituted an illegal and partisan assembly which the Emperor had forbidden. Uproar ensued. Even the moderate bishops took badly to being ordered about by the military in the church itself, and the action of Theodoret was generally seen as a rather impertinent communication from the Antiochenes, whose long delay was already widely resented. In the clamours of protests from the majority of bishops the formal response was given to Candidian asking by what right he judged their assembly to be illegal. His reply, that his personal instructions from the Emperor, as written in his copy of the official Sacra, did not permit him to validate such an assembly, was rejected as hearsay and merely a personal interpretation that carried little weight in the face of such a large number of bishops assembled for the purposes of being a supreme legislature. In short, his claim was rejected as not having the force of law. At this the bishops probably followed Cyril's lead in demanding they hear the terms of the Sacra for themselves, and in the sublime confidence of his annoyance Candidian proceeded to read it.

He intended to chastise the assembly but failed to see the implications of his act. The bishops who were now assembled represented everyone who had been summoned to Ephesus. Even the Syrians were there, represented by Theodoret and John's advance party. Not only were the Cyrilline majority seated in the church, but even the representatives of the dissident 68 who had not assembled for the enthronement of the Gospels that morning were now gathered in the church. The text

he read[125] outlined his responsibility for providing good order in the city, his duty to clear the council of monastic or lay agitators, and to ensure no partisan factions disrupted the balanced adjudication of the theological issues at stake. In its second paragraph the Sacra contained a key instruction: 'In consequence the Most Magnificent Candidianus, Count of the Imperial Chamber, has received his instruction to be present at your very holy Synod though without taking part in any enquiry or motion relating to the all-holy dogmas, since it is not permissible for any who is not on the list of holy bishops to engage in such affairs . . .'

When Candidian finished reading the Sacra he surely realised the full extent of his mistake. The Bishops acclaimed long life to the Emperor in demonstrative professions of loyalty, but now with the text officially declaimed in the symbolic presence of the whole episcopal gathering, the Synod of Ephesus was in formal session, legally as well as canonically sanctioned. Pointedly referring to the second paragraph where the Emperor had forbidden lay involvement in the proceedings, one of the bishops demanded that Candidian and his troops should withdraw as the assembled bishops were eager to fulfil their own imperial instructions and discuss matters of theology which fell outside military competence—as the Emperor himself had explicitly stated. Theodoret withdrew, as did Candidian, doubtless in some considerable annoyance, but they had lost the confidence of many of the dissidents whom they had persuaded that morning. Accepting the inevitable, several of that number started to come over to the Synod and these accessions to the majority continued throughout the day. As they left the building they heard the sound of episcopal staffs beating the floor—the First Session of the Council of Ephesus was at last begun.

The notary Peter drew up the list of the 155 attendant bishops who were present that morning[126] and arrangements were made for the third and final summons to be sent to Nestorius at his lodgings. This third delegation of four bishops[127] had the least enviable task. They set off in the late morning but did not return until hours later. The military had regrouped around Nestorius' lodgings and when Candidian had reported his mishaps to Count Irenaeus the evident fury of both aristocrats was more than obvious to their men. They

[125] ACO 1.1.120 f.
[126] ACO 1.2.3–7.
[127] Anysios of Thebes, Dominus of Opontos, John of Hephaistopolis, and Daniel of Darnis.

not only felt the bishops' behaviour to be an affront to their own rank but a frustration of the Emperor's will as they interpreted it. From this time onwards Candidian joined Count Irenaeus and set all the troops in alignment with the Cyrilline opposition, regardless of the changing voting lists and the evident collapse of support for Nestorius that happened in the ensuing week. As a consequence, certainly from that time onwards (though Cyril had had his suspicions beforehand),[128] the conciliar party refused to accept Candidian's role as a neutral broker, and later the bishops would complain loudly of his biased reporting of events back to the royal court of Constantinople, especially when this led to the subsequent arrest of Cyril and Memnon. Such factors should perhaps cause us to be sceptical of Nestorius' later complaints in the Book of Heraclides to the effect that Cyril tyrannically forced the council round to his way of thinking, and threatened his own life and safety like a common villain. Neither the synodical process itself nor the final voting figures can allow such an interpretation in regard to the first premise, and in relation to the second it is important to note that the only armed factions that are known to have been highly significant at Ephesus, blocking off food supplies, disrupting communications, involved in other clearly illegal activities—were those associated with Nestorius.

The bishops who arrived with their summons at Nestorius' lodgings were treated with unmasked hostility by the troops there. They were refused admittance to the courtyard, and forced to stand outside the yard walls in the midday heat, a mark of humiliating scorn. When they complained of their long wait in the open sun they were given the message by the guards that they could stand there until the cool of the evening for all they could care—they would not be recognised or admitted to the building. They returned to the church in the late afternoon and the conciliar business began in earnest, without Nestorius being in attendance. The refusal to attend did not abort the trial, but by established law the process had to allow a full hearing for the accused. Cyril had already prepared, for the Roman Synod which had tried Nestorius *in absentia*, a full dossier of texts. These had been revised already in advance, with Cyril foreseeing his refusal to appear, and the fact that Nestorius had preached quite openly and provocatively in the city over the last two weeks meant that there were bishops

[128] His negative opinion of Candidian's honesty in fulfilling his supposed mission as arbitrator is given in his Letter 27.

present who could testify to what they had heard *viva voce*. Here the negative witness of Theodotus of Ancyra and Acacius of Melitene, his former colleagues, would prove more than enough.

The priest Peter read out a synopsis of the events that constituted the Nestorian affair to date (explicitly mentioning Cyril's two corrective letters to his errant brother)[129] up to the point of the Roman and Egyptian synodical condemnations of the archbishop and the Emperor's intervention demanding an oecumenical reassessment. Juvenal of Jerusalem then asked for the imperial Sacra addressed to the bishops to be read out. This not only served legally to validate the subsequent Acta but conveniently justified their refusal to wait any longer for John of Antioch by re-emphasising the Emperor's own words: 'For the great care we have for such matters let it be known that no-one shall absent themselves, and that no excuse will be accepted before God or before us for anyone who fails to present himself with all speed in that appointed place and on the determined date (June 7th).'[130]

Firmus of Caesarea brought the point home by formally asking Memnon of Ephesus to state for the record how long they had already been delayed, and Cyril added to his reply the background of the pressing needs of the Ephesian bishops[131] and their impatience to fulfil the Emperor's will—a pious desire that was now capable of being realized because Count Candidian had just read the official Sacra before them and constituted their assembly.[132] The opening passages are clearly designed as a preemptive apologetic tailor-made for reading in Constantinople.

The Acts then record that the emissary delegations were asked to give an account of how Nestorius had responded to his three formal summons, and the narratives of how the major part of the day had been spent in fruitless attempts to reach Nestorius served to harden attitudes against him. The version of the third summons in the conciliar acts attributes all the hostility of the troops to the hubris of Nestorius himself.[133] It is more than probable that Nestorius never had sight of this third delegation, but the account represents the genuine outrage

[129] viz. The Second and Third Letters to Nestorius.
[130] ACO 1.1.116.
[131] Being careful to cite sickness and death as the exact balances of the reasons John of Antioch had submitted to him in his letter of the previous day as the reasons why he had been delayed.
[132] ACO 1.2.8–9. Doc. 36.
[133] ACO 1.3.3–5. para.4.

the bishops felt, and it was widely (and accurately) understood that the guards were refusing admittance on the direct orders of the lord of the house.

Monday June 22nd was wearing on into late afternoon by this stage when the Creed of Nicaea was read out at the request of Juvenal of Jerusalem, as the standard of orthodoxy to be followed in the subsequent adjudications, and immediately after this the notary Peter reminded the bishops once more of Cyril's Second Letter to Nestorius. Paragraph 3 of this text turns explicitly on the right interpretation of the Creed. Acacius of Melitene requested that the whole text should be read also, and Cyril immediately petitioned the council to adjudicate whether this letter was in accordance with the faith of Nicaea or not—the implication being that since it opposed Nestorius the latter's theology could hardly be in accordance with Nicaea if Cyril's exposition was accepted.

Firmus of Caesarea, Memnon, Theodotus of Ancyra, Flavian of Philippi, and Acacius of Melitene were the first to begin the formal acclamations of Cyril's letter as an orthodox exposition. So far, this was clearly a pre-arranged plan of procedure that the chief protagonists of the Cyrilline party should shape the synodical proceedings but, as the list of the subsequent acclamations of Cyril's letter demonstrates, no less than 124 personal interventions subscribing to the letter as a summation of orthodoxy (with the notary adding a note that the remaining (31) delegates also assented) makes it impossible to sustain any view that Cyril's theology was not wholeheartedly endorsed by the assembly. It was an extraordinary testimony, and a massive vote of confidence in Cyril's ability as a theologian. Some of the acclamations, like that of bishop Hermogenes recorded in the Preface to this volume, are far from being merely passive votes of agreement.[134]

After the acclamation of Cyril's letter the reply from Nestorius was called for, read out, and recorded in the Acts.[135] At this point Cyril again intervened and asked for a formal judgement on whether this text was in agreement with Nicene doctrine or not, and once again the bishops gave individual responses. That of Acacius of Melitene is the longest and most articulated in which he also defends Cyril's reputation against the charge that Nestorius raised to the effect that he taught the nonsense of a passible deity. Acacius concluded that

[134] ACO 1.2.29.
[135] ACO 1.1.29–32. cf. Translation in Ch. 5. following.

Nestorius' sense of the union of God and man in Christ was purely a nominal one.[136] Peter the notary recorded the details of 34 different interventions condemning the substance of Nestorius' letter, and then synopsised the general acclamations as a unanimous verdict: 'All the bishops acclaimed together: Whoever will not anathematise Nestorius let him be anathema, for the orthodox faith anathematises him. We all anathematise this letter and the doctrines of Nestorius . . .' and so on, giving an indication of the strength of the verdict against him.

The reading of the details of the synodical condemnation of Nestorius by Rome was then called for by Juvenal of Jerusalem, which culminated in its solemn *judicium* as given in the previous winter of 430: 'Know, then, that this is our public sentence, that if you do not preach the doctrine concerning Christ our God which the church of Rome holds, together with the church of Alexandria, and the whole catholic church, the same doctrine as the church of Great Constantinople has maintained perfectly well until your time, and if you do not anathematise with a sincere and written confession this unbelievable innovation which has attempted to divide what the holy scripture has united, then know that within ten days from the delivery of this injunction you will be expelled from all communion with the catholic church.'[137]

Already the legal case against Nestorius was piling up in weight, and immediately after the reading of the Roman synodical judgement, that of the Egyptian synod was read out.[138] At this instance in the Acts, the notary signified the reading aloud of the Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius (which conveyed the judgement of the Egyptian synod), as he had that of Celestine earlier, by the same stenographical device of citing the opening line and then adding kai ta loipa . . . the Greek form of "etc." There is, therefore, no way of telling whether the Twelve Chapters were read out at this stage of the proceedings at Ephesus or not. The Chapters were conceived as an appendix to the Letter, and their omission would not frustrate the sense of the text. Equally, it has been suggested, Cyril might well wish to cast a discreet silence over the existence of the Chapters since he knew that they were to be the subject of special attack from the Syrians. On the other hand, it seems far more likely that the Chapters would have been read out at this stage, not only as part of the original text of the letter, synodically validated, but also because Cyril could

[136] ACO 1.1.32.
[137] ACO 1.1.77–83. para.18.
[138] ACO 1.1.36.

ensure no better defence of the Chapters than to have them endorsed by the council Fathers ahead of any negative critique which might still materialise on the arrival of the Syrians. There is no evidence to suggest that Cyril did suppress the Chapters at this juncture, and indeed the Manuscript heading of his subsequent 'Explanation of the Twelve Chapters' suggests that Cyril composed the latter work after the bishops gathered in Ephesus had asked him for a clearer elaboration of his meaning. This cannot mean during the First Session, but probably reflects the reality that after the arrival of the Syrians there was some misgiving about the Chapters they had earlier endorsed, when the orientals insisted they were heretical, and many bishops asked Cyril for an explanation—which he seems able to have given them later in the time of his house arrest. This would suggest that the Twelve Chapters actually did form part of the reading of the Third Letter during the first session of the council.

The council then moved on to enquire what was Nestorius' response to these canonically delivered sentences against him. The Emperor Theodosius, and Nestorius relying on him, might well have regarded the decisions of the two synods as having been 'set aside' by the subsequent convocation of a general council to adjudicate the matter. As all the other bishops knew, however, although it was within the purview of a council to set aside the condemnations if it saw fit, it was not within the right of the Emperor to nullify them in advance, in the way he had presumed. When the Egyptian delegation to Constantinople had been called to give evidence of how they had delivered the sentences, and how Nestorius had rejected them in the winter of 430, the council moved to confirm the sentence in full accord with the canons governing the prosecution of one who refuses to repent after receiving a synodical decree.

The Palestinian bishop Fidus of Joppa intervened to state that Nestorius had not changed his views even to the present moment in Ephesus, and Cyril called then upon Acacius of Melitene and Theodotus of Ancyra to give formal testimony to the discussions they had held with Nestorius in his lodging house over the previous fortnight. Their confirmation was given that his theology had been faithfully represented so far, and that he still persisted in it. Theodotus repeated what Nestorius said to him: 'I cannot describe as God, an infant of two or three months',[139] the *cause scandaleuse* that had precipitated the

[139] ACO 1.1.38.

opening of the council in the first place, and perhaps one of the most careless and damaging remarks Nestorius could have made.

After hearing this evidence, Flavian of Philippi moved that the council should hear a patristic synopsis of doctrine on the nature of the incarnation. The assemblage of texts that was then read out was the fruit of Cyril's earlier work gathering citations such as those demonstrated in the De Recta Fide. In Schwartz's edition the conciliar florilegium runs to approximately six pages of texts that were read out at this point, and lists as its authorities such luminaries as: Peter of Alexandria, Athanasius, Julius of Rome, Felix of Rome, Theophilus of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, and Gregory Nyssa. Much has been made of Cyril's dependence on a few Apollinarist texts which resurfaced after Apollinaris' condemnation by disguising themselves as the works of orthodox Fathers.[140] The assonance between the pseudepigraphical texts and the writings of Cyril is beyond question, and Cyril actually felt secure relying on them precisely because he thought they were genuine patristic treatises. The argument that he 'utterly' relied on them is, however, so grossly overstated as to be capricious.[141] His use of these 'dubious texts' in the overall range of his citation patterns of undisputed Fathers is not significant, beyond the one instance of the treatise of Ps. Athanasius from which he drew his famous phrase: One Enfleshed nature of the Logos (which we shall discuss subsequently). In this latter context it has to be remembered that the pseudepigraphical texts were not those of the arch-heretic himself but of his later disciples who moderated his christological teaching considerably—precisely that assimilation of Apollinaris' insights on the unity of Christ to an orthodox conception that Cyril was himself aiming at.

The patristic authorities that he now presented to the assembled council for their consideration confirm the argument that he had no

[140] The texts are listed and discussed by P. Galtier. 'S. Cyrille et Apollinaire.' Gregorianum 37, 1956, 584–609.

[141] F. Young lists the Apollinarist treatises that Cyril used and concludes; 'These were the authoritative authors to which Cyril appealed, and the authoritative documents on the basis of which he composed his anti-Nestorian writings.' Young, (1983) p. 259. The partial truth is so twisted here as to suggest Cyril's use of such texts provided a significantly heavy input to his thought. The very opposite can be deduced when the pseudo-patristic texts are placed in the context of all his other unquestionably accurate patristic citations, and they emerge as a very small minority indeed, none of which have in them anything obviously objectionable in the sense, for example, that Apollinaris' early writings were objectionable.

need to fear that one or two base coins had devalued his impressive treasury. Far from it; the patristic testimonies which Cyril was able to cite, both here and in his large works such as the De Recta Fide and the Ad Reginas, demonstrate that he was no mere plagiariser of old formulae. His proof texts are far ranging and sensitively contextualised across the spectrum of the great teachers of the past. His own preparatory studies (as later instanced by his ability to write a digest of the whole debate in his Scholia on the Incarnation) indicate how systematically Cyril had thought through the issues and put his finger on the one central question—the single subjectivity of the Incarnate Lord—at a time when Andrew of Samosata, Theodoret, and Nestorius were still obviously boxing in the dark.

The florilegium that the council Fathers now received was deliberately chosen to represent the Eastern and Western traditions:

Peter of Alexandria.	On the Godhead. (3 citations).
Athanasius.	Contra Arianos III; To Epictetus. (2 citations).
Julius of Rome.	Letter to Prosdocius. (short citation).
Felix of Rome.	Letter to Maximus. (short citation).
Theophilus.	V & VI Paschal Letter.
Cyprian of Carthage	De Opere et Eleemosyne.
Ambrose of Milan.	De Fide. (2 citations).
Gregory Nazianzen.	Letter 101. (chief and longest citation).
Basil of Caesarea.	De Spiritu Sancto.
Gregory Nyssa.	Oration 1: De Beatitudine.

The most important of his proof texts was Gregory Nazianzen's letter To Cledonius, one of the major anti-Apollinarist writings of the patristic canon, and something that he had clearly studied in detail. Allied with this was Athanasius' Letter to Epictetus. Both texts Cyril regarded as his prime authorities, and accordingly have been represented in translation as an appendix to this present volume. The Western theologians largely appear, one suspects, to give colour and to please his Western allies.

After the patristic texts had been read, the notaries began to read out a number of passages selected from the works and sermons of Nestorius.[142] These were digested by Cyril, and by Nestorius' opponents in the church at Constantinople, and they evidently focus on those points held to be most objectionable—but this was entirely to the

[142] These texts are given in the section of translations following. cf. 'The Synodical Deposition of Nestorius,' p. 369f.

point in hand, to test his mind on the controverted question of the subjectivity of the Incarnate Lord. As such, while the prosecution's evidence might never have been erienical in intent, this is not the same as necessarily imputing substantial unfairness to it. Against six pages of the Schwartz edition given to the patristic citations, Nestorius was allowed a considerable say by proxy, his texts running to just over seven pages in length.[143] The selections, moreover, are governed by a definite sense of fairness: they are entirely representative of Nestorius' way of thinking. It was not the intention of Cyril to misrepresent this, only to demonstrate its incompatibility with the mind of the Fathers. The exposition of Nestorius' christology that follows in the present volume has (largely) been constructed independently of these texts by having direct recourse to Loofs neutral collection of the fragments of Nestorius' teachings. It is a relatively easy matter, then, to judge whether the synod heard an accurate sample of Nestorian teachings or not by comparing the collection presented in the subsequent chapter, with the collection assembled at Ephesus, which is offered *in toto* in the translated texts in chapter five.

After the lengthy readings were over the Acts record that a letter was read from bishop Capreolus of Carthage, excusing his absence and appealing for the council to allow no novelty in the faith. It looks, however, as if this text has been mislocated, for it seems to belong more fittingly to the opening business of that morning's procedure. If this suspicion is correct, the conciliar Fathers would have moved straight from the readings to a formal renunciation of Nestorian doctrine.

The notary drew up a document for all present to sign. It read as follows:

> Apart from other matters, since the Most Reverend Nestorius refused to obey our summons, and would not receive the most holy and reverend bishops whom we sent, then of necessity we have had to proceed to the examination of the impieties he has uttered and written in his epistles and in those writings which have been read out to us; [impieties] even in those things he has recently been speaking even in this very city in front of witnesses. All of this convicts him of thinking and preaching wickedly. We are compelled, therefore, by the canons and by the letter of our most holy father and fellow-minister Celestine, the bishop of the church of Rome, albeit with many tears, to come to this terrible sentence against him: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been blasphemed by this man, has decreed through this present most holy synod that

[143] ACO 1.1.45–52.

> the same Nestorius is excluded from the dignity of the episcopate and the whole assembly of hierarchs.[144]

Cyril, Juvenal, Flavian of Philippi, Firmus of Caesarea, Memnon of Ephesus, Acacius of Melitene, and Theodotus of Ancyra were the first seven to sign the document, either at the notary's table or on the altar of the church. They were followed in a subdued queue, that must have taken the best part of an hour to file past, by another 190 bishops in the church of St. Mary that evening. As the first session had progressed about forty of the 68 dissidents of the morning had come over to join the majority and signified their assent to the conciliar decree by signing the document. This is an extraordinary fact. It is not the case that Cyril added on names in the weeks ahead as he managed to find other supporters for from the notary's explicit scholion in the text 197 signatories were present on the evening of June 22nd 431, representing by proxy, as he says, a total of over 200 bishops; and in the days ahead he makes special note of the fact that 'other bishops came over to the council' and also signed their agreement—but these he did not record on the first list. The latter certainly included the Roman delegates. Cyril too, in his Letter 24,[145] states explicitly that 'there were more than 200 bishops' in the meeting, and he was talking about the first session of June 22nd. This means that the remnant of Nestorius' entourage must have largely abandoned him, and even some of John of Antioch's contingent must have broken ranks and joined the Cyrilline majority when they later arrived. At the end of that momentous first day of the council Nestorius was left with no more than 30 bishops still ready to support his cause. By any standards this was an extraordinary, as well as calamitous, collapse of support.

Crowds had been milling outside the church of St. Mary throughout the day, now as the doors opened the bishops looked out to a starlit summer's night and flickering illumination throughout the square and city streets from the torches of the enthusiasts who had been waiting expectantly all day for the outcome of the council. The result was greeted with great popular enthusiasm. Even apart from Cyril and Memnon's party of attendants it is clear that the celebration of the result was a genuinely popular affair. The women chanting in torchlit processions to honour the Virgin Mother of God resonated deep echoes

[144] ACO 1.2.54.
[145] ACO 1.1.1. (pp. 117–118).

for the Ephesians of the 'virgin mother of the god' Isis, whose cult used just such illuminated liturgies. It was also a cry of triumph that sharp-witted and intellectualist theology had not suppressed the people's own expressions of piety. Nestorius had never understood this depth of ordinary feeling; for years Cyril had known the ins and outs of it in his own church in Egypt, and was a past master in bending it to the service of the new gospel. In the common sentiment of the people Nestorius was thought of as one who had dishonoured the Virgin,[146] the patroness of the city of Ephesus, which prided itself on being a centre of pilgrimage to the site of her church and the tomb of her protector the apostle John.

Cyril wrote back to Alexandria shortly after the event and provides a graphic description of the scene:[147]

> The entire population of the city stood from dawn to dusk waiting for the decision of the holy council. When they heard that the wretched man was deposed, they all began, with one voice, to cry out in praise of the holy council, glorifying God because the enemy of the faith had fallen. When we came out of the church they made a procession ahead of us to the lodging house (for it was getting dark by this time) and even the women came out carrying incense to perfume the path before us. Our Saviour has demonstrated his power in the face of all who blaspheme his glory. Accordingly we will finish the legal papers necessary for his excommunication, and then by God's grace we will soon be with you again.

Cyril's hope for a speedy departure, in the event proved unfounded. He had yet to experience the full force of the troubles that were to fall upon him in the light of the protests which the Syrians and the military commanders delivered to the imperial court. Far from tidying up the papers and returning to Alexandria, the entire episcopal body was destined to be shut up in Ephesus for a total of four months to come.

On the morning of Tuesday June 23rd, the notice of deposition was delivered to Nestorius at his lodging house. It did not mince words:

> The holy synod gathered by God's grace in Ephesus, in accordance with the instructions of our most religious and Christ-loving Emperors,

[146] To this day one Greek tradition of icon painting of the Koimesis (death or assumption) of the Virgin has a wicked monk attempting to overturn the bier, as Christ takes her soul to heavenly glory; it is Nestorius, and he is chased away by an angel entering from the right.
[147] Ep. 24. ACO 1.1.1. pp. 117–118.

> to Nestorius, the new Judas. Know that because of your wicked preaching and disobedience of the canons, on this 22nd day of the present month of June in accordance with the ecclesiastical prescripts, you have been deposed by the holy synod and excluded from all ecclesiastical dignity.[148]

The notaries of the council proceeded to the Ephesian Agora to fix up the public proclamation of their result—a move that took events one stage further along the road to constitute the legal irreversibility of their acts, but were forcibly stopped by Candidian's soldiers who forbade the herald to announced the decree around the city, thus signalling the enforcement of his earlier threat to annul any proceedings of the assembled bishops that transpired before the arrival of the Syrians.

It is clear that Cyril must have acted with great alacrity at this point. He must have suspected that Candidian intended to blockade the bishops in the city, and thus immediately sent off letters to Alexandria and messengers to Constantinople informing the clergy there of Nestorius' deposition, and instructing them in the name of the synod to arrange, with the Emperor's consent, the election of a new archbishop. He evidently intended to broadcast the news as widely as possible so that it would not remain a straightforward legal matter that would rest entirely in the lap of the Emperor alone waiting for a resolution. Until the Emperor sanctioned the result of a council, as all sides knew, there was little weight in its decrees. By ensuring that the anti-Nestorian agitators at the imperial city had as much intelligence on matters as Theodosius himself, Cyril had struck a decisive blow by limiting Theodosius' room for manouevre. At the same time as he informed the clergy he forwarded a digested version of the proceedings against Nestorius to the court.[149] He wrote to the highly venerated abbot Dalmatius, a leader of the monastic clergy at Constantinople who had much influence with the Emperor and the Augusta Pulcheria alike, and subsequent reports he heard from the monastic party in the capital told him that public feeling was generally glad that Nestorius was gone. Cyril's hope was that Theodosius would accept his conciliar report immediately and then matters would be at an end. It did not prove so simple.

In the intervening days, waiting for news from outside the city of Ephesus, the relations between the two opposed camps deteriorated further. Candidian made it clear that he would continue to fulfil his

[148] ACO 1.2.64.
[149] ACO 1.3.3–5.

duties and refuse to allow any bishop to leave the city limits. For his part Cyril directed the notaries to collate the full acts of the council for future reference. The soldiers of Count Irenaeus made common cause with those of Candidian, regarding the Cyrilline majority as guilty of treasonable disrespect of the Emperor in their evident disobedience of their respective commanders. Henceforward, as the Cyrillines were to complain, Candidian was publicly allied with Nestorius' cause. Nestorius and his ten remaining companions spent the time composing a formal appeal to the Emperor dwelling, somewhat melodramatically,[150] on the violence that had been offered to them at Ephesus, and making it out to be as seditious and as partisan an assembly as possible.[151] The complaint was repeated by John's synod later, presumably taking Nestorius' words at face value, and it has become commonly accepted because Nestorius much later repeated the same assessment of events in his Book of Heraclides, where he points to the riotous events of the Synod of Ephesus in 449 and says that the same thing happened to him in 431. This version has no firmer historical weight simply because it is repeated three times, all from the same source, and ought to be taken with some caution. As John's later complaint makes clear, a sober charge could not lay the riotous factions at the door of Cyril (however much his enemies might wish to do so) they were attributed to Memnon. Visions of Cyril commanding large troops of Egyptian sailors, parabalani, and heavyweight monks to terrorise the neighbourhood are simply not supported by the evidence. He was not in Egypt but thousands of miles away from home. To speak of 'riotous factions' who were 'stirred up by Memnon' is another way of telling the story of widespread popular disapproval of Nestorius. The same is true at Constantinople where extraordinary demonstrations later demonstrated to Theodosius only too clearly that the archbishop was a widely hated figure even in his own church. To ascribe all these expressions of public dissent to individual figures such as Memnon or Cyril does not do justice to the important and volatile nature of the Vox Populi in fifth century politics and religion. Memnon certainly took advantage of the vociferous crowds and used the popular swell as a counterbalance to the forces of opposition but, again, the only significant body of armed men who unquestionably threw their weight around at Ephesus were the troops

[150] ACO 1.5. 13–15.
[151] 'The Egyptian and Asian bishops spread the soldiers of their escort through the market place and filled the city with tumult.' Ibid. para.4.

of Candidian and Irenaeus. Nestorius certainly found himself in an overwhelmingly hostile environment when he arrived at Ephesus, but with the garrison surrounding him there was never a time when he was in any serious personal danger.

At the end of his appeal to the Emperor Nestorius says that Cyril had so organised affairs that he could not gain a hearing at the council, but goes on to make a curious proposition. It is something of an indicator of his political naivety. He asked the Emperor to dissolve the Synod and convoke another council nearer Constantinople which would only admit, as he had originally intended, one or two learned bishops from each province who could debate the issues of faith calmly and without prejudice. The suggestion of another full-scale gathering of bishops would hardly be entertained with any seriousness by Theodosius in any circumstances. The theological presuppositions behind Nestorius' request are equally revealing of his understanding of theological method, which here makes a scholastic innovation. Instead of the traditional view of a general council that 'recognised' the abiding reality of the ancient faith and 'acclaimed' it, such as Cyril and the (none too learned) majority of the council were working from, Nestorius seems to have envisaged instead the nature of a council as an organ of royal policy—taking the council as the ecclesiastical version of the senate at the capital where royal policy was discussed and finely tuned. This kind of council would, by nature, be an aristocratic and elite body, in a sense a learned society questing for an uncertain end, a new credal definition or such like by means of rational discourse.[152] Here the unlettered would have no legitimate voice at all. Even Theodosius would find such a presupposition unacceptable, if not blasphemous. His own appeal to the 'holy men' around him, and even as far away as Syria where he had sent messengers to consult St. Symeon Stylites and the ancient Acacius of Beroea, demonstrates his allegiance to another method altogether. Like his sister Pulcheria, Theodosius was enough of a Byzantine to sense that orthodoxy and spiritual charism were indivisible, and thus the holy men stood even as arbiters of doctrine, not debarred from theological acumen because of their lack of formal education, but on the contrary

[152] The preferred theological method is one aspect of the affair that has made Nestorius such a positive icon for several commentators of the Anglican and Reformed churches, whose own traditions give a high predominance to speculative reason in their theological methodologies (even when citing the Scriptural text as 'authority') following a longstanding Western scholastic paradigm. Such a paradigm should not, however, be presupposed in the 5th century context. St. Gregory Nazianzen's Fifth Theological Oration (380 AD) presented the common 'patristic' archetype of theological method, and it departs considerably from the Nestorian paradigm. (E.T. of the Orations in E.R. Hardy, Christology of the Later Fathers, London 1954, pp. 128–214.).

elevated to decisive spiritual understanding by God's inspiration of their lives of prayer and asceticism. At the end of the day the opinions of the recluses, ascetics, and pillar dwellers carried more weight with Theodosius than the arguments of Nestorius.

Nestorius' letter of appeal to the Emperor was presumably sent to Constantinople at the same time as Cyril's, before the arrival of John of Antioch's party which put such a different light on events. Both rescripts seem to have been motivated by a shared desire to circumvent the incompetent Candidian. That of Nestorius implies to the Emperor that he did not attend the council primarily on Candidian's instructions. By appealing directly to Theodosius he obviously intended to come straight back to the court. Candidian, by strictly applying the original prescript that forbade any bishop to leave Ephesus until the business was concluded, was seemingly now in his way as much as that of Cyril's.

When Theodosius received both contradictory rescripts from the principal protagonists he began to realise how his hopes for the council had gone badly wrong. As yet Theodosius had received no formal report from Candidian. The latter had been pre-empted by both parties, and was now finding that matters were passing more and more out of his hands. He prepared a report which justified his dismissal of the Cyrilline council on the grounds that it was only a partisan meeting. Theodosius was to find the receipt of these three very disparate views of the events greatly confusing. What seems to have been his earlier acceptance of Cyril's account of the conciliar action was changed to an attitude of considerable annoyance when he read in Candidian's report that only a partial meeting had taken place. Cyril's Letter 27 was later to show his alarm at the way Candidian's version had gained acceptance at the court. But this was only the beginning of a long and complicated series of events at Constantinople that was to determine the final imperial policy regarding the status of the conciliar findings. Meanwhile events were not standing still in Ephesus, and even as the imperial post stations were busy transmitting the reports, the situation in Asia Minor changed in such a dramatic way that the intelligence to which Theodosius was going to react was already obsolete, almost before it arrived.

In the midst of the stand-off at Ephesus John of Antioch's party finally arrived, as he had said that it would, within the week of his advance party, probably on Friday June 26th. He was escorted in to the city by the soldiers of Count Irenaeus, and doubtless by the time he had arrived at his lodgings he had heard the outraged complaints of Nestorius' group. In these circumstances he did an extraordinary thing, probably on the spur of the moment, for he held a synod on his own authority to excommunicate the leaders of the majority council. It was a testimony to his inexperience as a hierarch, to Nestorius' desperation (for the latter completely abandoned the policy he himself had initiated only a few days before by appealing directly to the Emperor) and to Candidian's incompetency in allowing an even more partisan group meeting than the assembly of the week before.

Delegates sent by the majority council had tried to see him on his arrival in the city, and attempted to communicate the synodical decrees, seeking his assent to them. These were refused admittance for several hours while John listened to reports from Nestorius, and then they were ignominiously turned out by the soldiers. The account of their expulsion with menaces soon turned the feelings of the Cyrilline majority decidedly against John.

John proceeded to convoke a formal gathering of his bishops, and those of Nestorius, there and then in his lodging house within hours of his arrival. Beginning with Candidian's account of his grievances, exactly as Cyril had done he demanded a reading of the imperial Sacra entrusted to the Count, and thus constituted his synod as the intended council of Ephesus. It has subsequently been known as the Conciliabulum (little council) to distinguish it from Cyril's synod.[153]

The 43 bishops who comprised the meeting accused Cyril and Memnon of fomenting disorder in the city against the ecclesiastical canons and against civil law, and of 'audaciously, and in a disorderly manner of having begun a council of your own in a spirit of heresy even though we were at the very gates of the city'.[154] The decree of the conciliabulum focused particularly on Cyril's Third Letter to Nestorius, which had been the object of Theodoret's close and critical scrutiny over the previous winter. The bishops declared Cyril's Chapters to be 'in agreement, in the main, with the wickedness of

[153] The Acts of the meeting are found in ACO 1.5.119–124.
[154] Ibid. para.5.

Arius, Apollinaris, and Eunomius',[155] and they went on to proclaim the penalty of excommunication and deposition against Cyril and Memnon, while attributing to the other bishops the milder sanction of excommunication 'until such time as having recognised your error, you repent, accept the faith of the holy Fathers gathered together at Nicaea (without adding or subtracting anything from it), anathematise the heretical chapters published by Cyril of Alexandria in opposition to the evangelical and apostolic doctrine, and concur with the Sacra of the most pious and Christ-loving Emperors who commanded that the problems of the faith should be examined in an exact manner in a peaceful spirit'.[156]

The legality of the conciliabulum, in civil terms, was even more questionable than that of the preceding council, but in ecclesiastical terms it was wholly invalid and certainly reckless since no formal summons had been delivered and no examination of Cyril's statements had been conducted within the synod before the condemnations were pronounced. These legal aspects fade, however, in the face of the extraordinary prospect of a meeting of merely 43 complaining of the partisan nature of their 200 opponents, representing as they did Africa, Rome, Egypt, Macedonia, and Asia Minor.

Nonetheless, John's sentence had one important effect on the Cyrilline party, and that was to alert them to the considerable feeling that ran against Cyril's 12 Chapters, and particularly to the charge of crypto-Apollinarism that had been levied against him. In the weeks ahead Cyril had to engage in many efforts to assure bishops in Ephesus that the Chapters were orthodox. For some of his supporters, not least the Roman delegates who were soon to arrive, the very existence of them was news. He was compelled to compose a lengthy explanation of his meaning and, as the manuscript tradition testifies, this essentially justificatory work was designed for the benefit of his own party as much as for the Antiochenes. Until this point Cyril had been entirely on the offensive, and largely successful. The next four months were to be his most severe trial and called for all the diplomatic skill and theological wit he could summon to keep his synod in a cohesive momentum.

In the immediate aftermath of the conciliabulum its notice of deposition and excommunication was announced. On the following

[155] Ibid. para.11.
[156] Ibid. para. 15.

day letters were prepared for the royal court, the clergy, senate, and people of Constantinople.[157] In these, the 'theologically ignorant Egyptian and Asian bishops' were portrayed as the chief causes of the disorder which had overtaken everything, and the Cyrilline council was described, highly tendentiously, as made up for the rest of an assembly of Messalian heretics and various excommunicates 'a mass of men completely ignorant of the divine doctrines, and full of restlessness and violence'.[158]

As that Saturday of June 27th grew late, the practicality of the conciliabulum's decision was to be put to the test. Memnon had control over his own great Church of St. Mary and the martyrium of St. John. From the outset he had refused Nestorius permission to celebrate the liturgy in any of his churches. As the time drew near for Vespers of the Sunday feast, John of Antioch asked Candidian to ensure that none of the Egyptian or Ephesian clergy should be allowed to celebrate the liturgy in the churches, since their hierarchs had been deposed. Candidian was evidently not convinced of John's ability to represent himself successfully as the true conciliar party because the demand he made to Memnon was that only the local Ephesian clergy should celebrate the liturgy that Sunday. Memnon refused his competence to give any liturgical instructions at all, and pointedly asked Cyril, as conciliar president, to celebrate. The local people from then onwards resisted all efforts by the Syrians to enter the Ephesian churches. The Syrian attempt, probably on the Sunday morning, to seize the church of St. John by force and use it to consecrate a new bishop to replace Memnon, stirred up the outrage of the whole town and the Syrians were ignominiously driven back to their lodgings[159]—an event which John independently described, assuming the role of the outraged innocent, as a violent and unreasonable refusal of the local bishop to allow them to perform their devotions at the Apostle's shrine.[160]

Cyril's letter to Constantinople announcing the deposition of Nestorius had arrived first in the capital and, according to the archimandrite Dalmatius' report to Ephesus, had apparently initially been favourably entertained by the Emperor. John's letters and news of the Conciliabulum were still on their way, but Nestorius' earlier appeal for a reconvening of the council, together with Candidian's subsequent

[157] ACO 1.5.124 f.
[158] ACO 1.5.126.
[159] As reported in Memnon's letter to Constantinople ACO 1.3.46.
[160] ACO 1.5.27.

complaint that only a 'partial meeting' had taken place had arrived on June 25th and caused Theodosius to hold the earlier reports from Cyril in suspicion.

Theodosius was determined that his original instructions should be obeyed, in spite of widespread delight in the streets of the imperial city when news of the deposition of Nestorius had leaked out (as Cyril had planned when he forwarded separate letters to the clergy of the royal city). Accordingly, on June 29th the Emperor sent an examining magistrate, Palladius, to Ephesus with the commission to find out exactly what was going on, and 'assist' Candidian in keeping order. The Emperor ordered all the bishops to stay in Ephesus until the investigation was complete. The tone of his letter was one of clear annoyance, and he berated them for not obeying his instructions. Until a free discussion had been held the results of the Cyrilline council were to be set aside.

Meanwhile the clergy of Constantinople, especially the monks, celebrated the Cyrilline council and greeted the news of Nestorius' deposition with undisguised delight. On June 26th, when it seemed that the Emperor was turning from his first policy of accepting the Cyrilline synod, the monks of the city organised a procession to the imperial palace to plead with him to confirm the result. The procession was led by the aged archimandrite Dalmatius (whom Theodosius held in high veneration as a holy man and had unsuccessfully requested to assume the throne of the church of Constantinople himself). This caused a sensation in the city for in fulfilment of a vow the aged monk had lived as a hermit in his own monastery, never leaving the confines of his cell for the last forty six years. His sudden appearance in public, to plead the cause of Cyril and the condemnation of Nestorius was still not enough to sway the Emperor. He received the delegation politely, asked for the prayers of the old man and dismissed them.

Palladius reported with great haste. On his return, in early July, he brought with him a protest delegation from the majority council telling him that in no way could the decisions of the synod be set aside since they had been canonically constituted. The delegation was instructed by Cyril to expose the falsity of Candidian's version of events. The latter was accused of presenting a completely false account of the happenings and of 'having preferred his friendship with Nestorius to righteousness',[161] a polite way of accusing him of blatant partisanship.

[161] ACO 1.3. (84) p. 11.

The blame for the stirring up of civil discord was laid at the door of Count Irenaeus and his soldiers, and the Acts of the synod were presented to the Emperor so that it could be proven that Nestorius did in fact receive a fair judgement of his case. The bishops appealed to the international representativeness of their meeting, and ended by denouncing the actions of John of Antioch as wholly illegal.

A few days later Count Irenaeus made a personal visit to the court to plead for the cause of his friend Nestorius. By this time Theodosius had also received the acts of the Conciliabulum, and he complicated matters in an extraordinary way. He decided to ratify both synods in the form of accepting their respective depositions of Nestorius, Cyril and Memnon, and in so doing dismiss the whole assembly, probably intending to defer a resolution until new patriarchs had been chosen.

As the week drew to a close at the beginning of July the people of Constantinople were agitating in the streets.[162] The popular dissent was focused in a protest meeting in the Great Church to demand the dismissal of their archbishop. On Saturday evening on the 4th of July[163] the people occupied the church building and demanded assurances from the Emperor that the Cyrilline synod would be honoured. They stayed in the church for three days chanting acclamations in praise of Pulcheria whose policy favouring the deposition of Nestorius they identified as their own.[164] In response, the court official Domitianus was sent from the Palace to announce to the crowd the Emperor's decision. When he read out the confirmation of Nestorius' deposition the news was greeted with acclamations but the mood turned to one of fury when he proceeded to inform them that the decrees of the conciliabulum were also being confirmed and Cyril and Memnon were thus equally to be held as deposed. Continuing agitation at popular level gave Theodosius grounds for thought. The palace was also the scene of constant discussions as various factions urged conflicting advice on the Emperor.[165] One thing Theodosius knew, after receiving Palladius' report, and that was that Candidian's position was hopelessly compromised, so he arranged to send another and more substantial politician to replace him. He instructed Count

[162] Kopt. Akt.(Kraatz) p. 49; ACO 1.1.3.(14.); Holum (1982) p. 170.
[163] Thus Holum (1982) p. 170 dates the events between the Saturday and Monday of July 4–6th.
[164] ACO 1.1.3. 14; cf. Battifol (1924).
[165] ACO 1.1.5. 136.

John, the Imperial High Treasurer, to go to Ephesus in person and effect his policy.

Meanwhile, in Ephesus, the spirits of the Cyrilline majority were about to be lifted. At long last on Friday July 10th the Roman delegation, Arcadius, Projectus, and the priest Philip, arrived in the beleaguered city. Cyril, still unaware of the Emperor's decree against him, at once reconvened the Synod in a second session. All the original members reassembled in Memnon's episcopal residence to hear the letter of Pope Celestine read out in which he requested confirmation of the Roman Synod's earlier condemnation of Nestorius. It was a great boost to morale.

On the following day, July 11th, a third session reconvened in Memnon's residence at which the Roman legates formally accepted and signed the Acts of both the previous sessions of the council. Further letters were sent to the Emperor and clergy of Constantinople again requesting that the decrees of the synod should be ratified. The conciliar momentum was under way once more, and attention began to turn to John of Antioch's continuing refusal to negotiate with the majority. Even after the arrival of the Roman delegation John refused to acknowledge the bishops in Ephesus unless they abandoned Cyril and Memnon according to the terms set out by the conciliabulum. On Thursday July 16th Cyril summoned the council to its fourth session to settle the impasse with John. The bishops met in the church of St. Mary and delegates were sent out to summon John and the Orientals. The first delegation was chased away. The second received a reply from John that he could not in conscience communicate with excommunicates. In the light of these replies Cyril suspended his meeting for further discussions among his leading bishops.

On the following Friday July 17th the fifth session of the council was opened, and a third and final delegation was sent to demand John's presence. When they arrived at John's lodgings his archdeacon would not give them a verbal reply but tried to present them with a scroll that contained the archbishop's answer. Suspecting that it contained a formal sentence of condemnation against Cyril and Memnon, the conciliar delegates refused to accept it and the two sides parted acrimoniously. The council proceeded to judge John's actions against Cyril and Memnon to be wholly unjust and uncanonically performed, and then passed sentence against John and 34 of his companion bishops, excommunicating them and suspending their rights of ecclesiastical jurisdiction—a deliberate stage short of the

irreversible decision to depose them. News of the actions were again forwarded to Constantinople.

On Saturday July 22nd a sixth session was held to discuss the petition of the priest Charisius who had been suspended by his bishop Theophanes of Philadelphia (one of the members of the conciliabulum). In this legal process Charisius gave a meandering testimony as to how Nestorius' chaplains Anastasius and Photius had been instrumental in imposing on the church at Philadelphia a baptismal creed composed by Theodore Mopsuestia—by now a bogeyman for the whole Cyrilline party. It was a symbolic tying in of Theodore to Nestorius and doubtless Cyril propelled the priest to such prominence in the Acts so as to have the connection formally stated. The session ended with a canon to the effect that the Nicene Creed alone was the legitimate symbol of the universal church. It was probably at this session that a petition was heard from the Pamphylian bishops seeking confirmation of their policy to readmit certain Messalian (or Euchite) schismatics to full communion.

On Monday July 31st[166] the seventh and final session of the council was convened in the church of St. Mary. This too was concerned with more generalised business and the composition of regulatory canons, but since some of these affected the rights of the church of Antioch they were celebrated as deliberate expressions of the decrees of the fifth session. Rheginus the archbishop of Cyprus took advantage of the occasion to petition the synod to accede to his church's longstanding claims to be independent of the patriarchal jurisdiction of Antioch. There was some debate over the validity of appealing to the canons of Nicaea in support of the claim,[167] but the Cypriot bishops testified that neither Rheginus' predecessor nor the earlier archbishops of Cyprus had actually been consecrated by the patriarch of Antioch. The outcome was the synod's recognition of the independence of the church of Cyprus. To this day it remains an autocephalous church.

Six other disciplinary canons were composed on the same occasion reinstating clergy deposed by Nestorius, and threatening deposition

[166] The copyist in the Acts mistakenly dates this to August 31st, but after the arrival of Count John at the beginning of August no further meetings of the council took place.

[167] Canon 4 of Nicaea had attributed the right to consecrate bishops to the bishops of the local province. But canon 6 of the same had also reserved to the great and ancient sees their longstanding metropolitan rights.

or excommunication on those who would not abide by the council's decrees. The Pelagian appellants to the court at Constantinople were also condemned, doubtless on the specific request of the Roman delegates. It was possibly at this same session that Juvenal of Jerusalem pressed his case (for which he had long been agitating) that his ancient see should be given independent patriarchal rights, and an extension of jurisdictional territory. The attempt was supported by dubious documentary evidence, and was robustly resisted by Cyril as an unwarranted innovation in canonical precedent. Cyril doubtless had no desire to undo all his careful canonical proceedings with a suspect move that could play into his opponents' hands. While Juvenal's attempt failed at Ephesus, he would be successful at Chalcedon, pressing the same petition twenty years later.

The heat of the summer in Ephesus proved very trying for many of the bishops, lodged as they were in cramped conditions. Count Irenaeus and Candidian, after the conciliabulum's decree, were more open in their efforts to harass and hamper the Cyrilline party in any way they could. Supplies were restricted to them, and many messengers trying to convey letters and appeals to Constantinople were intercepted both at the docks, and on the land routes. The Syrian party hoped that they could regain the political initiative by subverting Cyril's links with the outside world while concentrating all their own efforts now on petitioning the royal court. On one occasion Cyril had to resort to smuggling out a letter to Constantinople in the hollow cane of a disguised beggar. It told Dalmatius that the orthodox bishops were being persecuted by the military and could hardly bear to be imprisoned in such conditions any longer. 'We are being decimated by the heat here', he said, 'and almost every day we bury another of our number.' This pressure hold on the Cyrilline party was to be short-lived. At the beginning of August the High Treasurer Count John arrived and took control of the city with a firm hand in the name of the Emperor.

The imperial chancery had prepared letters for him to bring to the bishops whom they thought were the prominent leaders of the council: Pope Celestine, Rufinus of Thessalonike, and Augustine of Hippo. This was an inauspicious start. The first two had never been present at the council at any stage, and the third had been dead for a year. It serves to illustrate how difficult it was under the prevailing conditions of transport and communication to gain a clear picture of events.

Count John soon showed that he was made of sterner stuff than

Candidian, and knew the Emperor's mind quite clearly. The list of the letter's addressees, however anachronistic it might have been in parts, was quite clear in another respect, for no mention was made, quite deliberately, of Cyril, Memnon, or Nestorius. On his arrival he summoned all the bishops to his lodgings for a plenary session on the following day. Nestorius and the Syrians were ordered to attend first, in the early hours of the morning. When the Cyrillines turned up they entered the loggia of the building to discover, for the first time, their opponents already sitting. Memnon did not appear, later excusing himself on the grounds of illness when a detachment was sent after him. Cyril immediately demanded the exclusion of Nestorius from the meeting as being canonically and irreversibly deposed. John of Antioch rose in turn and demanded the exclusion of Cyril and Memnon on the same grounds, and a tumult ensued. Count John was not moved. He told the assembly that since the Emperor's commands were addressed to the bishops specifically excluding the aforenamed, it was of little moment to him whether they were present or not; and he proceeded to drop the bombshell of announcing the Emperor's decision to validate the acts of both councils in so far as he was going to confirm the sentences passed against all three. The bishops were ordered to leave for their homes, and the meeting was broken up by Count Candidian who had been ordered to escort Nestorius away to house arrest, and by Count James leading off Cyril under guard to his lodgings and then pursuing Memnon whom he similarly arrested, freezing the assets of the church at Ephesus.

Significantly, John of Antioch abandoned Nestorius at this juncture, and signified his agreement with the Emperor's policy. The Cyrilline majority at first were hardly able to take in what had happened, but steadfastly refused to abandon Cyril and Memnon, and being unable to criticise Theodosius directly, concluded that his policy could only have been formulated on the basis of false reports. Only a few days before, they had been agitating to leave Ephesus for their homes, now that they had been commanded to do so they were determined to sit it out in defence of their synod's legality.

It seems probable that the Emperor had believed the reports of Nestorius and Candidian and John of Antioch, all of which depicted Cyril as a tyrannical ringleader who had railroaded sheepish and ignorant bishops into submission by the force of his personality. He seems to have estimated that once the two hierarchs were under arrest and Memnon's access to finances had been cut off, the rest of the bishops would soon fall into line with a suitably severe demonstration

of imperial disfavour. It was an estimate which proved totally misguided. In the weeks ahead he began to realise that the majority opinion was both substantial and deeply held, and that the opposing camp commanded very little support indeed.

From this time onwards the locus of events moved entirely to the capital where negotiations were conducted at an even more furious pace, in the usual Byzantine manner, mostly in secret and relying on varying channels of access to important persons. Count Irenaeus was lobbying for Nestorius, and at the end of August the Cyrilline council sent a formal delegation with a petition to the Emperor requesting him to disregard all 'false reports' and confirm only their decrees.[168] Pulcheria's influence was once again at work on her brother, and gave Cyril hope that the imperial decision could be changed. Although Memnon was effectively silenced by his house arrest, the same could not be said of Cyril. His network of agents in the capital was put to full use and their aim was to undermine all the influence Count Irenaeus might command at court to their detriment.

Still having access to the great fiscal resources which the see of Alexandria could command Cyril used his agents to petition influential aristocrats around the throne, and leading ladies of the entourage of Pulcheria, to support their cause, and the petitions were accompanied by lavish 'eulogiae' (blessings) in cash and kind. The use of donations to assist the progress of any petition through the corridors of the imperial court was fairly standard practice in fifth century Byzantium, but the scale of Cyril's largesse was extraordinary. It almost bankrupted the Alexandrian church.[169] Count Irenaeus soon found that his face was not so welcome among his colleagues in the palace.[170] The vacillating Theodosius was induced to review his position yet again, but he was insistent on one point, that the theological issues should be debated and not simply reduced to the matter of personal excommunications. He decided to summon a small group of delegates from each party to debate the case in his presence at the capital. For this purpose he set aside the Villa Rufiniana at Chalcedon which had been Theophilus of Alexandria's setting, years before, for the Synod of the Oak which deposed John Chrysostom. On Friday September 11th he opened the colloquy in person.

[168] ACO 1.3.32 f.
[169] Cyril Ep.96, E.T. McEnerney (1987) p. 151; see also Battifol (1919); Jones (1986) vol.1, p. 346.
[170] Count Irenaeus' letter: ACO 1.5.135 f. paras.2,5, passim.

The Cyrilline delegation, deprived of his presence since he was still held under arrest in Ephesus, was comprised of the Romans Arcadius and Philip, Firmus of Caesarea, Theodotus of Ancyra, Acacius of Melitene and Euoptius of Ptolemais in Africa. For their part the Syrian delegation consisted of John of Antioch, John of Damascus, Hierius of Nicomedia, Paul of Emesa, Macarius of Laodicea, Apringius of Chalcis, Helladius of Ptolemais in Phoenicia, and Theodoret of Cyr. Acacius and Theodoret were the main opposing theologians of the groups.[171]

The Orientals put the best face on things that they could but as soon as they arrived at the capital they found themselves unwelcomed by the people at large. Almost immediately they heard to their dismay that a week before, on September 3rd, Theodosius had re-confirmed the deposition of Nestorius. In response to the latter's much earlier petition to leave Ephesus for the sake of his own safety (sent to the court even before the conciliabulum took place) the Emperor finally sent the laconic reply that he was graciously pleased to accede. The Praetorian Prefect Antiochus had communicated the news to Nestorius that he was to be released from Ephesus, and to enjoy free passage back to his former monastery at Antioch. Antiochus added a touching personal footnote to the formal edict: 'I have prayed to God's kindness that your holiness may flourish and live in accordance with his will. Knowing the prudence of your spirit and your innumerable outstanding qualities we have every confidence that you stand in no need of consolation from us'.[172]

The letters of the Orientals back to their party at Ephesus were at first buoyant and hopeful. They tell how Theodoret bested Acacius in his arguments, how their opponents could only keep on 'praising Cyril to the skies' and how Acacius had scandalised the senate and the Emperor so much that 'his majesty's cloak fell off'[173] supposedly in horror at what he was hearing. Acacius' fault, apparently, was to teach that the divinity suffered, which probably means no more than that he defended the orthodoxy of the Twelve Chapters. The Orientals were clutching at straws. Theodosius ended that first session by requiring written positions to be drawn up by each side.

[171] The texts representing the course of the debates are found in ACO 1.7.72–81.
[172] ACO 1.7.71.
[173] ACO 1.7.77. Fragments of Theodoret's speeches on this occasion are preserved in the Acts of the Fifth Oecumenical council of 553.

Four other sessions of the Chalcedonian Colloquy were to follow throughout September and October. Both parties had been refused permission to enter the city itself, partly because local feelings were still running very high against Nestorius and now against the Antiochenes in general whose condemnation by the synod had already been communicated to the clergy in Constantinople. While the Cyrilline delegates were popular and welcome, the Orientals found even the churches closed against them in the suburbs of Chalcedon. They made no less than three formal protests to the Emperor about unfavourable treatment but, ominously, none of them was answered. In the end they had to hire a private house for their stay using the courtyard as their church and the galleries as their pulpit, from which they delivered daily sermons to their curious visitors.

Neither side in the negotiations could convict their opponents of heresy, however hard they tried to do so. It was a lesson on whose significance both John and Cyril later had cause to dwell. The Orientals accepted the Theotokos title, taught the singleness of the Lord's person, and the inseparable union of the two natures. In response to their main attack on the Apollinarist character of Cyril's Chapters, the synodical party followed Cyril's directions as outlined in his extensive Explanation of the Chapters. They adopted what was to be, increasingly, his future position—that the anathematisms had been a strong statement designed specifically against Nestorius' personal heresies. Without abandoning the principle of their doctrine Cyril was ready to accept they could not be the base for rapprochement with the Syrians. To the external observers from the imperial diplomatic service the embryonic form of a compromise was clearly emerging, although the two parties were as yet unable to see it. Could not the continuing insistence of the Syrians on the condemnation of the Chapters be set aside? In return could not the demand of the Cyrillians that the Orientals should ask in writing for forgiveness from the synod for their behaviour at Ephesus, equally be forgotten? This much at least was clarified at a diplomatic level by the Chalcedonian Colloquies, and the imperial diplomats noted it for future reference. But in terms of the theological debate between the bishops the exchanges did little to induce any side to cease hostilities.

The Orientals knew that their cause had been lost at court. Understandably, they argued bitterly that Theodosius and his officials had been corrupted by Cyril's gold. In a later letter of Acacius of Beroea to Alexander of Hierapolis the old man presents this (as hearsay) to

explain why the Emperor, apparently so favourable to their cause at first, turned against them so decidedly at Chalcedon.[174] He speaks there of Cyril's conviction of bribery, of his deposition being confirmed, and of his illegal flight from custody but all this represents more of the aspirations or fantasies of the orientals than the political realities. It did not need gold to change Theodosius' mind, he was a past master in the art of vacillating. In fact, before the Syrians had even arrived at Chalcedon he had confirmed Nestorius' deposition and sent him into exile. If he had intended to do the same with Cyril he would surely have done so at this time in September. Cyril's payments to the court officials undoubtedly smoothed the way for his cause, and given his own belief in the rightness of that cause he seems to have had no qualms about applying the money for that end. Nonetheless the key factor which swayed Theodosius was without question the solid determination of the Cyrilline party not to abandon their president whom they identified as synonymous with their cause. In contrast, apart from being a tiny minority, the Syrians vacillated over Nestorius, and John at least was known to be willing to abandon him to his fate, much to the disgust of some of his own party.

The church at Constantinople had by now lost interest in the Orientals, and was busy with the business of electing a new archbishop—no Syrian this time but one of their own, a native Roman, Maximian, who had been a cleric of the church since the days of John Chrysostom.[175] His consecration was arranged for Sunday October 25th,[176] and the Emperor asked the Cyrilline bishops to take part in the ceremonies. The Orientals received no invitation.

By this stage Theodosius' policy was finally to be published. He had largely come down in favour of the Ephesian majority. Nestorius' deposition was to be final, and the accusation of Apollinarism against Cyril was dismissed. On the other side he was determined that the Antiochenes should also be accepted as orthodox in their doctrine. The colloquies had proved to him that no further resolution of the matter could be expected in the short term and as he had no further hopes from the less-learned parties still in Ephesus, he sent back the

[174] cf. Hefele (1908) pp. 375–376.

[175] Maximian was a childhood friend of Pope Celestine's. He was a pious and affable man, but no great intellect. The aristocrats had lobbied for the election of Proclus but Theodosius passed him over, evidently favouring a more nondescript candidate in the circumstances, and perhaps one not so overtly allied with his sister.

[176] Socrates. Hist. Eccl. 7.37. 19.

command that all should finally disperse to their homes.[177] In the Sacra of the dissolution of the council he gave permission for Memnon to resume his duties at Ephesus, and for Cyril to return to Alexandria. The ancient editor of the Casinensis collection which preserves this text added a footnote: 'This was the last of the Sacras after the blessed Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, had already returned to his city.'

Cyril had left Ephesus on October 31st. From this it has sometimes been deduced[178] that he fled from his prison in defiance of the Emperor, but this is an unwarranted supposition.[179] Even before Maximian's ordination on October 25th, it was obvious which way the Emperor's decision had gone, and Cyril's postal service was far more efficient than that of the chancery. On October 31st he surely knew that the Sacra freeing him had already been composed and so he returned home to a welcome as victor of the day.[180] His reputation everywhere, except of course in the oriental patriarchate, both as an ecclesiastical leader and an eminent theologian had never run higher. But there was still one international crisis to resolve, for large parts of the church were now out of communion, and the Emperor was determined to see the rifts between the major Christian sees closed with the utmost urgency.

4. The Long Search For Peace, 432–444

From the time of his house arrest in Ephesus Cyril had realised the need to go further in answering the Syrian charge of Apollinarism than simply by dismissing the accusation as a patent nonsense (something that he always thought was the case). His Explanation of the Chapters of 431 reflects the political reality that on no account could he simply renounce the Anathemas. Much as he might regret the

[177] ACO 1.7.142; 1.3.67.

[178] See, for example, Davis (1987) p. 159.

[179] After his safe arrival back in Alexandria Cyril set to work composing an apologetic of his behaviour at Ephesus, seeking Theodosius' pardon for any faults he had committed. It is clear from the document that he was more worried about the annoyance he had caused the Emperor by his appeals to the Empresses and Princesses in 430, than by any supposed 'flight' from custody in 431 cf. Apologeticus ad Theodosium. ACO 1.3. 75–90, paras. 4–5.

[180] Davis (1987) p. 160, uses the evidence of Isidore of Pelusium's letter to Cyril ('a number of those who have been at Ephesus represent you as a man burning to avenge a personal injury rather than seeking in orthodoxy the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. .') in order to argue that the Alexandrian church was 'unimpressed by his intrigues' when he arrived home. This is far from the truth. Isidore was quoting to Cyril reports he had heard from the Orientals, not from Egyptians.

way the argument had turned on these highly condensed propositions rather than on the discursive works in which he had set out his theological argument at considerable length, the fact was this was where the conflict had settled.

The orientals had determined, in the Chalcedon colloquies, to insist on nothing less than the condemnation of the 'heretical' Chapters, and force Cyril to a public recantation of them. On Cyril's part he stood by his synopsis as legitimately expressing fundamental truths of christology which someone who was not bent on dividing the personality of Christ would not find objectionable. In the two years following Ephesus there is, nonetheless, a new concern visible in his writings, to seek for a rapprochement with the Syrians as long as they recognised the central doctrine of the singleness of Christ's person. He had been convinced by the reports of his party at Chalcedon that such was indeed their intent, or at least that of John, Acacius of Beroea, and Theodoret who spoke for the Antiochenes in this exchange.

There was some confusion at the time, and has been since in scholarly opinion, as to whether the compromises reached by both parties in this period amounted to a substantial revision of theologies, or simply an acknowledgement of the essential orthodoxy of both the Alexandrian and Antiochene conceptual traditions, once each had been sufficiently explained to the other. Cyril was unrepentant and unyielding over his anathemisation of Nestorius. As far as he was concerned rapprochement with the Antiochenes was one thing, any compromise with what Nestorius had taught was something quite different: the key issue being the explicit acknowledgement of a single subject referent in Christ.

The historical developments of the years after Ephesus throw light on important issues involved in interpreting Cyril's later theology. In so far as the central issue at stake concerned the legitimacy of confessing two natures abiding in Christ after the incarnation, the events of the next four years were not so much laying the council of Ephesus to rest, as preparing the ground for three major councils to come; Ephesus 449, Chalcedon 451, and Constantinople II 553. The agenda of all of them was largely determined by Cyril's works, and their respective results similarly drawn from his suggestions, frequently using his very terms. Cyril's arguments on the fundamental issues in christology, therefore, echoed loudly for centuries to come in the Eastern Church.

Shortly after his arrival back in Alexandria in the early part of November 431, Maximian, the new archbishop of Constantinople,

wrote to him a cordial letter[181] informing him of his election and praising him for having been an outstanding confessor of the faith in the recent difficult circumstances (a diplomatic reference to his imprisonment by the Emperor). Cyril replied in a letter of congratulation comparing him to the faithful Heliakim who replaced Shebna whom God had rejected.[182] The letter is a most careful restatement of his christological position explaining how he 'rejects the teachings of the mad Apollinaris'.[183]

The Syrians, who had been snubbed at Maximian's consecration, continued to regard Nestorius as having been uncanonically overthrown, and would not recognise the legitimacy of his successor. They had left the capital after several fruitless weeks of trying to change Theodosius' policy and induce him to outlaw Cyril. On their return home they passed through the town of Ancyra in Galatia where, to their scandal and great chagrin, they were treated by the clergy and townspeople as excommunicates. Theodotus, the bishop of the place, had been one of the leading Cyrillines at Ephesus, and from Constantinople had written a joint letter with Firmus of (Cappadocian) Caesarea to instruct all the churches of their jurisdiction to shut their doors against them.

In protest, they held a council there and, as soon as they arrived back in their own territory, another at Tarsus in Cilicia, and a third at Antioch in which they reiterated their condemnation of Cyril as a heretic and anathematised the bishops who had argued against them at Chalcedon. They circulated their synodical decisions widely throughout the Patriarchate and this was established, in the popular mind throughout the Syrian territory, as the published decision of the 'Council of Ephesus'. John of Antioch visited the centenarian bishop Acacius of Beroea whose moral authority ran very high throughout the international church, and gained his support.

In the meantime Maximian of Constantinople proceeded to apply the conciliar decisions of the Cyrilline council as the true canonical results of the synodical meeting at Ephesus. This policy he applied

[181] Ep.30, ACO 1.1.3. p. 71. E.T. McEnerney (1987) p. 119.
[182] Ep. 31. ACO 1.1.3. p. 72; E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 121–125.
[183] Ibid. 'The Word of God became a perfect man for our sake, not by having endured a change or alteration, or any confusion as is often attributed [to me], or mixture, or a change into that which he was not, but rather by having remained what he was [ie. God] even in his humanity which is like us.' The final phrase radically distinguishes Cyril from later Eutychian Monophysitism.

throughout his own jurisdiction, and in consequence deposed four of the notable episcopal supporters of Nestorius within the region.[184] The rehabilitation of these dissidents soon became another of the causes of the Orientals.

By the middle of the year 432 Theodosius[185] decided to press for a healing of the rift with the Syrian bishops, and consulted Maximian and his local synod at Constantinople for the best way to proceed.[186] Shortly afterwards he wrote to John of Antioch deploring the continuing enmities and setting out the terms of his plan for reconciliation which the synod at Constantinople had drafted under the influence of bishop Proclus who had a large part in it. The Syrians were required to recognise the deposition of Nestorius (*de facto* by recognising Maximian) and condemn his teachings as heretical, whereupon Pope Celestine, Cyril, and all the other bishops would receive them into communion. The Emperor also wrote to the two outstanding spiritual authorities then recognised in the East—St. Symeon Stylites, and Acacius of Beroea, asking them to mediate in the dispute. He successfully won over both, and their influence was not negligible in bringing about the climate of a reconciliation. Acacius of Beroea in particular was asked to be a broker between John and Cyril in the cause of reconciliation and he performed this task faithfully and with no little skill.[187]

At first Theodosius seems to have decided to summon John and Cyril before him in person for a face to face colloquy at the palace in Nicomedia. He presumed that a reconciliation could be effected on the spot. There is no evidence, however, that such a meeting ever took place, and it was probably a first thought abandoned when it was made clear to him that more was at stake than a simple reconciliation between two individuals.

The imperial Notary and Tribune Aristolaus was given the commission of bringing about the unity. He brought the Emperor's instructions to Antioch, where John consulted with Theodoret and

[184] Dorotheos of Marcianopolis (who had preached against the Theotokos title in the cathedral at Constantinople in Nestorius' presence), Helladius of Tarsus, Eutherius of Tyana, and Himerius of Nicomedia.

[185] In response to a letter of March 432 from Pope Celestine who appealed to him to resolve the problem of the rupture of communion but to apply the decisions of Ephesus without compromise. The Pope wrote shortly before his death in July of the same year. He was to be succeeded by Sixtus III (432–440) the Pope who rebuilt St. Mary Major's in Rome.

[186] As in Cyril's letter to Acacius of Melitene, ACO 1.1.4. pp. 20–31.

[187] ACO 1.7.146.

others before holding yet another synod composed of his leading theologians.[188] The result, although it was not stated in so many words, was a rejection of the Emperor's overtures. In return the Syrian synod set out its basic terms for reconciliation which involved the rejection of Cyril's Letters and Chapters, and the use of the Nicene Creed and Athanasius' Letter to Epictetus as the sole standards of orthodox christology. The latter was the text in which Athanasius had attacked the Apollinarists. In this insistence that only these two ancient and hallowed texts should be elevated to confessional status, the Orientals were attempting tacitly to set aside the whole work of the Council of Ephesus, and the entirety of Cyril's christological work and doctrine on which it was based. Acacius of Beroea undertook to set out these terms in a letter to Cyril and his text, together with the Emperor's own letter demanding that a reconciliation be pursued, was brought to Alexandria by Aristolaus on the second stage of his mission.

Cyril replied to Acacius[189] with another carefully composed synthesis of his theology, set out to demonstrate why the accusations of Apollinarism against him were unfounded. In the letter he renounced the principles of Apollinarism, explained his understanding of the single subject of the incarnate Lord, and gave ground on the Chapters in so far as he admitted that 'the force of the propositions was written only against the teachings of Nestorius'. But he refused to abandon all his theological work, and told Acacius:

> Your Perfection sees that they seek an impossibile thing. So far are they from a desire to appease the discord between us that they have taken matters back to the very beginning of this incessant strife.[190]

Cyril was not so naive as not to have seen the implied basis of the rejection of the synod of Ephesus whose only christological statement was that of Cyril's own letters. If he renounced his own writings, he renounced the whole synod, and the condemnation of Nestorius it had pronounced.

This statesmanlike letter won Acacius over. At about the same time one of the most notable oriental theologians, Rabulla of Edessa, announced that he had decided that Cyril was right all along. It caused a great stir. These significant shifts of opinion among the orientals,

[188] Alexander of Hierapolis, Acacius of Beroea, Macarius of Laodicea, Andrew of Samosata, and Theodoret of Cyr.

[189] Ep. 33. ACO 1.1.7. 147–150.

[190] Ibid. Ep. 33. para. 3.

fostered by Acacius of Melitene who had long been Cyril's enthusiastic ally, began to signal the favourable time for a reconciliation might finally have arrived. Alexander of Hierapolis and Andrew of Samosata were still violently opposed to any rapprochement,[191] and were appalled at the shift they witnessed in the attitudes of John and Acacius. But soon Theodoret began to signify his acceptance of Cyril's explanations. As far as Theodoret was concerned Cyril's letter to Acacius of Beroea had signalled a complete volte face in his theology,[192] particularly in what he felt to be Cyril's abandonment of his Fourth Anathema. A close study of the actual text of the Anathema demonstrates that it was Theodoret who had misunderstood the argument, not Cyril who had changed his mind. Theodoret's general opinion that Cyril after the council had entirely abandoned the principles he set out in his Chapters is not a defensible view, and was partly caused by Theodoret's excessive reliance, for understanding Cyril's overall christological teaching, on the very limited range of texts he appears to have studied. When one considers the whole range of Cyril's extensive work it is clear that the Cyrilline positions of the years after 432 when he is seeking a resolution of the conflict with the Antiochenes are not based on abandonment of his principles and doctrine of the years before Ephesus. Theodoret's opinion, however, has continued to be sustained by several more recent commentators. Durand's[193] observation, relevant to this point, is very apposite when he notes that Cyril can hardly be said to have 'capitulated' in his theology at this period. In 433 he was in far less danger than he had been when under house arrest in Ephesus. Then he would not give an inch. Once he thought he could give ground without sacrificing the principle of the single subjectivity of the incarnate Lord he was ready to negotiate and settle.

In this climate of negotiation John of Antioch sent off a personal delegation to Alexandria in the form of the old and very diplomatic[194] bishop Paul of Emesa. In the letter that Paul brought to Cyril, John lamented the theology of the Chapters, requiring further elucidation

[191] Alexander said: 'I would rather lose my see and my right hand than enter into communion with Cyril.' He refused all appeals, and even the direct command of the Emperor, and was eventually condemned by the court to penal servitude, serving his sentence in the dreadful conditions of the salt mines in Egypt.

[192] Letter of Theodoret to John of Antioch. ACO 1.7.163.

[193] de Durand (1964) p. 26.

[194] Cyril was completely won over by him: 'I marvelled at the complete courtesy of the man, and was deeply sorry to see him leave.' Cyril's letter to John of Antioch, Ep. 89, ACO 1.1.7. p. 153; E.T. McEnerney (1987) p. 132.

of their meaning (that is a defence of their orthodoxy), but held out an olive branch in the form of a statement that he had rejoiced when he read a copy of the letter Cyril had recently sent to Acacius of Beroea. John's letter was vague on important doctrinal points. It kept silent on the issue of Nestorius, and concerned itself only with the question of the conditions necessary for the 'rehabilitation' of Cyril. To accompany the text John gave Paul the profession of faith which he and Theodoret had drawn up at the Chalcedon colloquy in response to Theodosius' demands for a written version of the respective positions of the parties. He requested Cyril to sign it now as a condition of restoring communion.

The negotiations with Paul were long and fragmented, partly because Cyril was bedridden with an illness he had contracted. When he studied the Antiochene profession he found it to be substantially orthodox and told Paul as much, but he wholly rejected John's accompanying letter since it evaded the issue of Nestorius' condemnation and had justified the conciliabulum at Ephesus as being 'motivated by a zeal for orthodoxy'. It was a point which had raised Cyril's temperature even more than his illness, and Paul had a task in hand to smooth matters over in Alexandria once the contents became generally known. Cyril made it clear that the doctrinal point was evident enough, and if the orientals would not distance themselves from Nestorius then there could be no hope of any reconciliation.

In reply Paul of Emesa told Cyril that it was not John's intention to be evasive and added, somewhat naively, that the 'whole of the Orient' shared his opinions and was ready to anathematise Nestorius. One suspects that the Tribune Aristolaus who had accompanied Paul was applying no little pressure for a solution. Taking Paul's statements at face value Cyril urged him to anathematise Nestorius publicly himself, there and then, as a token of the earnestness of his intentions, and then he would be restored to full communion with the church of Alexandria. And this Paul did, with Cyril subsequently sharing the eucharist with him, and inviting him to preach in his cathedral church. On Christmas day 432 Paul gave a sermon in the great church of Alexandria and described Mary as the 'Mother of God' to tumultous applause from the congregation.

Cyril was now anxious to keep up the momentum of what appeared to be such a favourable reconciliation and he tried to induce Aristolaus to go back to the Antiochenes after winter had ended, for he had heard that they were becoming dissatisfied with Paul's efforts as an

emissary, given that several months had passed with seemingly no return. Accordingly, in the spring of 433, the imperial delegation prepared to return to Antioch.

Cyril would not accept Paul's verbal assurance that all the Orientals agreed to condemn Nestorius and required a formal signature from John of Antioch to this effect, on documents he prepared and entrusted to his two deacons Cassius and Ammonius. In reply to John's demands in his earlier documentation Cyril incorporated the Antiochene profession of faith and added futher explanations of his teaching, as required, designed to satisfy the Orientals that he had never taught an Apollinarist conception of the mixture or confusion of natures in the incarnate Lord. Confident of the success of the mission Cyril also prepared formal letters of communion which he entrusted to the Tribune Aristolaus. Even if the negotiations failed Cyril knew that by this action of taking the initiative first, he would secure himself at the royal court. He first made Aristolaus take an oath, however, that on no account would he betray the Alexandrian church by giving these letters to John without first having witnessed John's signature on the deed condemning Nestorius and his teachings.[195] Aristolaus assured him that this would be done and gave him to understand that if John did not accept the terms of the reconciliation thus set out, he would travel on directly to Constantinople and exonerate Cyril from all blame in the affair. There were thus grounds for Cyril, in the early part of 433, to be very pleased with the way negotiations had progressed.

When Aristolaus' delegation arrived at Antioch in the late Spring of 433, the terms were accepted. The Syrian determination to make Cyril recant the Chapters was quietly dropped. John signed Cyril's document with a few minor modifications, recognised Maximian, and condemned the 'blasphemous teachings of Nestorius.' When relations were thus formally restored Cyril sent his famous letter 'Let the Heavens Rejoice',[196] which has since been known as 'The Formula of Reunion'. It largely repeats the substance of his earlier submissions (including the Antiochene profession which emanated from the Chalcedon Colloquy). On April 23rd Cyril announced from his pulpit in Alexandria that communion had been re-established in the christian world, and then he composed letters informing Pope Sixtus III and Maximian

[195] As in Cyril's Ep. 37. To Theognostus. ACO 1.1.7. p. 154.

[196] Ep. 39, To John of Antioch. This text was canonised at Chalcedon as an authoritative expression of orthodox christology.

of Constantinople of the developments.[197] In his reply to Cyril the Pope told him: 'You can rejoice as the victor of the day'.[198] For his part John of Antioch announced the news to the Emperor, and sent an encyclical letter around his patriarchate informing his bishops that Cyril's orthodoxy had now been accepted. He published the letters that had been exchanged of late, to demonstrate that Cyril had sufficiently answered their demands for further explanation, and concluded by asking his bishops not to do anything that would upset the peace that had been so laboriously negotiated. He evidently sensed trouble ahead among his own party, and he was not mistaken.

The coherence of the Antiochene party was, by this stage, somewhat dissipated. John of Antioch took the majority with him, and it was generally interpreted, in the Orient at least, that Cyril had been forced to climb down, and then had been accepted back into the fold by John once he had complied. For several of the leading lights of the conciliabulum, however, John's acceptance of communion with Cyril without an explicit rejection of the Chapters was no less than an out and out betrayal of fundamental principle, and this party continued to press for Nestorius' rehabilitation and Cyril's condemnation. This was a small and hardline group which included Alexander of Hierapolis and, needless to say, Nestorius himself, who far from lying low in his monastery had begun a pamphlet war, much to John's embarrassment. A third element regarded John as dilatory, and of being swayed more by political expediency than a desire for justice, and these turned more and more to Theodoret of Cyr for intellectual guidance and for a representative who could be a proper spokesman for the Syrian tradition.

Theodoret accepted the reconciliation with Cyril, though he interpreted it as a complete turn-about on Cyril's part, symbolised in the latter's submission to the Syrian profession of faith which had originally been drawn up at Chalcedon.[199] For Theodoret, however, Nestorius' teaching contained nothing so objectionable that it merited his deposition, since it was substantially inspired by their mutual teacher

[197] ACO 1.7. 157–160.

[198] Ep. 51. ACO 1.2. 107–108.

[199] As far as Cyril was concerned he accepted the orthodoxy of the Orientals' statements but, as his letter to Eulogius shows, did not think that they had expressed matters particularly well: 'the easterners are somewhat obscure in their terminology', and at no stage did he have any intention of adopting their methods of speaking and theologising henceforth.

Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia, the great Syrian scholar who had died in the high reputation of sanctity. Theodoret refused to concur in any policy of abandoning Nestorius, and indeed was only compelled to do so in one of the final sessions of the Council of Chalcedon 18 years later. These varying degrees of the Syrian understanding of the reconciliation process (basically that Cyril had been brought to his senses by Antiochene theology) differed substantially from the way in which the other sees (Cyril, Maximian, Sixtus, and Juvenal) interpreted the events. For them, and the majority of the bishops, the reconciliation demonstrated that Antioch had finally recognised the issues and turned away from its former tradition of teaching, towards a commonly agreed doctrine emphasising the single subjectivity of Christ. Such massive and unspoken differences of judgement were bound to come to the surface in fresh conflict sooner rather than later.

News of the reconciliation, what it signified and on what basis it had been concluded, began to seep out through the churches in quite different forms. Rumours circulated (wrongly) that the new Pope Sixtus sympathised with Nestorius.[200] Acacius of Melitene and Isidore of Pelusium independently wrote to Cyril in some anxiety, seeking reassurance that mention of the 'two natures' of Christ in his letter of reconciliation did not signify a betrayal of his insistence that Christ must only be confessed as one—the dominant theme of all they had stood together to defend. Cyril's long reply to Acacius is an important text in the elucidation of how the Syrian agreement was to be harmonised with the resolutions of Ephesus. His two very significant letters to Succensus, also from this period, similarly concern the same question, as does his reassurance to Bishop Valerian of Iconium[201] where he complains of a proliferation of 'old gossips who have messed up the whole story'. The confusion was such that even Cyril's agents in Constantinople entertained the rumour that their archbishop had recanted. He wrote to them in some exasperation:[202]

> How is it I write to you about all our affairs, and then you write back to me as if you understood nothing at all?' [and he concludes], 'So do not give way to anxiety. We have not been so stupid as to anathematise our own writings. We stand fast by what we have written, by what we have thought. Our beliefs are orthodox and blameless, in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the faith as set out by our holy Fathers.

[200] Cyril accused the Orientals of forging a memorandum from the Roman legate Philip to signify Sixtus' disapproval of Nestorius' deposition.

[201] Ep. 50, ACO 1.1.3. pp. 90–101. E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 212–227; see also Scholia On The Incarnation 8.

[202] Ep. 37, ACO 1.1.7. p. 154. E.T. McEnerney (1987) p. 142.

To counter the growing force of hearsay Cyril wrote a round of letters, especially to Constantinople, trying to get Maximian more involved in the controversy. He had little success, and soon came to regard the latter as being too languid, and blind to what was happening around him. But some of his letters bore fruit, particularly the appeals he addressed to the royal court in the person of the Empress Pulcheria. Cyril's reputation was now gaining higher and higher currency, and his letters served to alert the imperial chancery to the fact that the Antioch-Alexandria reconciliation was far from secure. It also highlighted the problem that the aged and intellectually slow Maximian might not be up to the job in hand.

In the Orient, the Nestorian party were now focusing their efforts on demonstrating that Nestorius was essentially orthodox because he simply had restated the doctrine of their church's great teachers, Mar Diodore and Mar Theodore. Their writings, but especally those of the latter, were copied extensively at this period and circulated throughout the Syrian region. Nestorius' harmony with the tradition was emphasised, and Cyril's differences were highlighted as evidence of his innovation in matters of the faith.

At this juncture, in April 434, Maximian of Constantinople died, and Proclus (three times a candidate for the office) was elected in his place. Proclus was the same who had outraged Nestorius by preaching on the Theotokos in his presence at the very beginning of the controversy, and had proved himself a loyal ally of Cyril's ever since. In contrast to the simple Maximian, he was a highly polished orator and a consummate diplomat who had great influence at court, especially with Pulcheria. On top of all this he was a very good theologian. With his accession the royal court decided to speed up the process of pacification in the church. A policy was adopted of imposing the Formula of Reunion of 433 as a test of faith on all the oriental bishops, carrying the force of imperial law to sanction it.

Nestorius himself, who had kept up a stream of polemical writings since his deposition, was the first victim of the new crackdown. He was sent from his monastery near Antioch into a real penal exile this time, first to Petra, the Arabian caravan city, and subsequently (when he continued his agitation against the Emperor's policy) to the prison colony of the Great Oasis in Egypt, a dismal place reserved for high prisoners of state and fallen courtesans. It was a natural prison,

a waterhole surrounded by a vast sea of desert. In the Roman estimation it was truly the end of the world, and here he had more than enough time to reflect on the events which had caused his downfall, composing his memoirs in the form of the Book of Heraclides.[203] The record of his exiles and the hardships he endured makes sad reading, and several commentators have noted the nobility of spirit with which he bore his sufferings.

For the previous two years since 431 Acacius of Melitene and Rabulla of Edessa had been publicising the terms of the council of Ephesus, as distinct from the conciliabulum, throughout the Syrian patriarchate. Like Cyril they had increasingly come to focus their opposition against the continuing influence of Theodore Mopsuestia's theology, refusing to allow that this could stand as the authentic representative of the whole Syrian tradition as such. It was at this time that the Armenian church had commissioned a series of translations to be made into its own language of a 'library of the Fathers of the church' to serve as the basic teaching materials in their schools of doctrine. The works of Theodore had been proposed to them as an essential part of this canon. Acacius and Rabulla warned the Armenians that Theodore was not regarded as orthodox at all[204] and a considerable argument blew up around the issue in the Syrian church. It was to prove the spark that re-ignited the wider controversy. A confused delegation from the Armenian church came to settle the matter with the new and learned archbishop of Constantinople and in response to their query, Proclus produced his celebrated Tome to the Armenians[205] in 435. This digested objectionable christological passages from the writings of Theodore (as anonymous propositions) and condemned them as blasphemies, thus throwing a diplomatic veil over the author's true identity and honouring his reputation for sanctity while leaving no one in any doubt as to his theological unreliability. Acacius continued to castigate the memory of Theodore openly,[206] but it was as vehemently defended by others such as Ibas of Edessa who had succeeded in

[203] French translation from the Syriac by Nau (1910). E.T. by Driver & Hodgson (1925). For a note on his subsequent adventures (being captured by a raiding party and held to ransom) cf. de Durand (1964) p. 25. n.2.

[204] cf. M. Richard (1948) pp. 393–412.

[205] PG 65.856–873; ACO 4.2.187–195. It was a text that opened up the way for a new settlement in terms of agreed terminology in the christology debate, and thus an important bridge between Cyril's work and that of the council of Chalcedon.

[206] M. Richard (1948); de Durand (1964) 27–31.

place of Rabbula, and held diametrically opposed theological opinions to those of his predecessor.

Continuing his royal commission to resolve the crisis in the eastern church Proclus proposed that John of Antioch should sign the Tome to The Armenians, and condemn another florilegium of texts he had prepared (from the writings of Theodore and Ibas of Edessa) which taught the double subjectivity of Christ. On the understanding that they would do so without condemning anyone by name, most of the orientals accepted this compromise, though Acacius of Melitene and several other Cyrillines regarded the coyness about Theodore's memory as an evasion of a central issue. So the argument rumbled on, with Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibas of Edessa, and Theodoret[207] himself becoming increasingly identified as the Syrian 'alternative' to the more and more universally accepted doctrine of Cyril and the council of Ephesus.

In several letters Cyril expressed his unhappiness at the way the Orientals seemed to be ready to anathematise Nestorius yet carry on the substance of his doctrine by propagating Theodore's views as authoritative. He also complained about Theodoret's very public dissidence[208] wondering why John of Antioch did nothing to bring him into line. But Theodoret was unrepentant, and the initiative had now passed from Cyril to the royal court, in the hands of Proclus.

Cyril's personal standing had risen to an international level by this time. It was acknowledged publicly when Theodosius asked him to accompany his increasingly estranged wife Eudoxia on her pilgrimage to Jerusalem[209] in 438. When he was there, engaged in a grand tour on a lavish scale, where Eudoxia dispensed donations on ecclesiastical foundations and gathered relics like a new Helena, Cyril was met by a group of Antiochene dissidents. These informed him of the considerable disagreements in the Orient over the status that ought to be afforded to the teachings of Theodore, and gave him clear evidence of Proclus' policy to avoid further confrontation by avoiding any direct and explicit condemnation of Theodore's memory.

Cyril viewed the policy as misguided, and on his return to Alexandria later that same year he set to work in a new burst of literary efforts. The writings of this last period of his life turn more and more to

[207] The works of these three became digested into the so-called 'Three Chapters', and they were anathematised at the council of Constantinople II in 553.

[208] Ep. 63. E.T. McEnerney (1987) p. 51.

[209] Ep. 70. PG 77. 341. E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 68–69.

attacking Theodore of Mopsuestia directly and openly in the harshest of terms, as a heretic. They include key works such as That The Christ is One, the Exposition of the Creed[210] and the Three Books to the Monks.[211] When the news got out that Cyril was now vehemently attacking the reputation of Theodore it fanned the flames of deep resentment among many of the Orientals who had only been lukewarm supporters of the union in the first place. Theodoret, for one, was barely able to contain his rage that Cyril should so presume to move against his own teacher and mentor. Proclus appealed to Cyril not to jeopardise the fragile peace and begged him to allow matters to rest. John of Antioch too made it clear to him that he would not be accountable for all his Syrian bishops' reactions if Cyril continued to pursue his policy of attacking their 'Fathers'. And so, while he made it abundantly clear to everyone, including the Syrians,[212] that he did not regard Diodore or Theodore in any sense as 'Fathers' of the church,[213] Cyril decided to accept the advice of Proclus[214] and John,[215] even though it was much against his better judgement, and dropped his assault on the reputations of the Syrian teachers by name.

He decided that perhaps it would be better after all to proceed quietly and condemn the propositions while allowing the memories of Diodore and Theodore to remain venerable in their own churches, since his earlier policy would serve to 'rekindle the flame that has started to die down.' As Cyril knew, it was a policy that deferred the problem rather than solved it, as events over the next two centuries would more than bear out. Edward Schwartz has suggested there

[210] ACO 1.4. 49–61.

[211] Now only surviving in fragments.

[212] Ep. 67 to John of Antioch and His Synod, ACO 1.1. 4. pp. 37–39; E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 61–64 (see para. 7.); Ep. 69 To Acacius of Melitene PG 77. 338–340, E. T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 66–67; Ep. 71 To Theodosius, ACO 1.4. 210–211, E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 70–71.

[213] And thus, implicitly, that their christological teaching was not an authentic 'tradition' of the church, such as could be compared, for example, with that of the Alexandrian Fathers such as Alexander, Peter and Athanasius. The issue is an interesting one in the consideration of the nature of christian tradition. Many recent studies simply presuppose that the christological crisis of this period is the result of a clash of two disparate christian traditions in the public arena. Cyril would have dissented from such an analysis in the case of Diodore, Theodore, Nestorius and Ibas, whose works he regarded as pseudo-traditions.

[214] Ep. 72. To Proclus. PG 77.343–346. E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 72–74.

[215] ACO 1.5.314–315. He agreed not to proceed any further against those who had died in the peace of Christ. The council of Constantinople II reversed this policy and anathematised the authors of the 'Three Chapters'.

was an undisclosed pressure on Cyril from the imperial court to adopt this change of attitude, and he named Pulcheria as the active agent behind it.[216] Given Cyril's obvious reluctance to leave off from the fray this is highly likely, and he continued to speak with evident scorn about the intellectual integrity of those (among the Syrians) who agreed to anathematise the teachings of Nestorius but would not anathematise the sources of those teachings which themselves even more blatantly suggested the double subjectivity of Christ. In a letter to Proclus he wryly quoted Homer on the subject:

> I have my doubts about many of them who would object to the action (against Theodore). But the whole business might serve as a pretence for them to reopen their grieving for the teaching of Nestorius, like that spoken of by the poet of the Greeks: They mourned in semblance for Patroclus, but really each one mourned her own sorrows.[217]

The final years of Cyril's life began to settle down to a semblance of relative calm after decades of energetic involvement at the highest level of international politics. He continued his literary works with unabated energy. The monumental work Against Julian the Apostate belongs to this final part of his life, when he once more redirected his attentions to the church's pressing need to offer a systematic cultural and missionary programme as an alternative to the pagan revival of the fifth century. He sent a copy as a peace offering to Theodoret, who congratulated him on his achievement.[218] A few letters remain from this period showing us how he intervened to settle disputes within his own patriarchal territory. His letter to Calosyrius of Arsinoe (Fayyum)[219] shows that crude forms of folk religion, such as those attacked by Theophilus a generation before, were still in evidence among the monks, most of whom were unlettered peasants. His letter also discusses the problems of Messalians in the monasteries (an issue that had featured at the council of Ephesus), and the treatment of Melitians—the remnants of the schismatic clergy who had so troubled the Egyptian church in the days of Alexander and Athanasius. Calosyrius set before him the theory that certain monks were propa-

[216] Konzilstudien, Strasbourg 1914. vol. 20, p. 36.

[217] Ep. 72. PG 77. 343–346. para. 5. Citing Homer's Iliad. 19.302;

[218] Cyril may have had an ironical motive in this, for he may well have composed this monumental work of anti-pagan apologetic to render the similar but slimmer work of Theodore Mopsuestia's on the theme, definitively superseded.

[219] Ep. 83. (Against those saying God is Anthropomorphic); Critical text and E.T. Wickham (1983) pp. 214–221; E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 109–112.

gating to the effect that the eucharistic elements lost their efficacy if they were reserved in the churches after the liturgy had finished, and in response Cyril restated his lifelong concern for the importance of orthodox eucharistic theology:

> They are insane who say these things. Christ is not altered, nor is the holy body changed, but the power of this consecration, his life-giving grace, is perpetual in his body.

He also wrote to the bishops of Libya and Pentapolis urging them to take greater care in the candidates they were advancing for ordination to the priesthood, since several of the monks had been scandalised by the appointment of newly married men and the ordination of ex-monks who even came back to monasteries from which they had been expelled, now in the role of celebrants of the liturgy.[220]

In 441 John of Antioch died and was replaced by his nephew Domnus. On two occasions[221] Cyril wrote to the new patriarch. The first occasion was to intercede for a certain bishop Athanasius of Perrha who had been deposed from his church, at the request of his clergy at a metropolitan synod in Syria, and who had appealed against its decision to Cyril. Cyril has sometimes been accused in these instances of interfering in Domnus' jurisdiction, but the appeal of bishops to eminent sees was long established custom, and Cyril's response was simply to urge Domnus to attend to the matter himself so that a proper synodical hearing could be held on the affair presided over by the patriarch of Antioch in due canonical order.In writing as he did, however, he deliberately passes over the canonical rights of the church at Constantinople, whose jurisdictional territory was being expanded at this period by the policy of Theodosius, to the detriment of the former Antiochene patriarchate. In writing this way to Domnus, Cyril is again demonstrating something that had motivated him at Ephesus—that the long established ecclesiastical canons were more important to him than current ecclesiastical policies emanating from Constantinople.

The second letter to Domnus resulted from an appeal he had received from an old bishop who had been dismissed from his see, apparently for incompetence in his financial administration. Cyril's letter to Antioch suggests that for justice's sake a proper canonical trial ought to have been held, for the old man now felt aggrieved at his dismissal. Cyril

[220] Ep. 79. PG 77.364–365. E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 97–98.
[221] Epp. 77 & 78. PG.77. 359–364; E.T. McEnerney (1987) pp. 92–96.

obviously felt a certain amount of pity for the petitioner, especially in the way that he had been turned out without any financial security himself. Once again he urged Domnus to reconsider the case in accordance with canonical law rather than by making executive decisions single-handedly. He did not necessarily want the judgement reversed, but he points up yet again the need to follow established canonical procedure, and simply urges that the old man be given something like a pension:

> May your Holiness, therefore, considering what is decreed in the holy canons, and what is proper for the church, and for those assigned to the sacred ministry, and in addition being moved by this letter from us, cause the old man's weeping to cease.

Like many others who have felt the advance of their years Cyril passes out from history[222] evidencing a keen sense of compassion for the old and dispossessed. It might have reflected a growing anxiety of his own, within his own church at Alexandria, that the reins of power were beginning to slip from his fingers, and more and more trouble was brewing not least on the financial front where day to day church administration was tested. The events immediately following his death suggest that his final year would have given him ample opportunity to realise that his archdeacon Dioscorus was growing restless with the old man, and perhaps too obviously eager to have a radical house cleaning of the internal affairs of the church, especially the finances which Cyril had lodged in the care of members of his own family. But whatever his age or his anxieties, in the final letters of his episcopate the old vigour is still there, the assurance of his international stature remains, and there is no wavering of his claim to a canonical right to supervise the ecclesiastical affairs of the East.

Cyril died on the 27th of June 444, a little short of his 70th year, and only five years before the christological controversy which had taken up so much of his life's energies was to flare up once more in a full scale international synodical crisis (The Council of Ephesus 449), and seven years before the great events of the council of Chalcedon. Perhaps its was providential that the voice which had determined so much of the agenda for the latter council was quieted in time for a later generation to take stock of the situation anew.

[222] Easter letters to Pope Leo, dated to 444, are not authentic, but 7th century Celtic compositions. See B. Krusch, Studien zur Christlich mittelalterlichen Chronologie: Der 84 Jahrig Ostercyclus und seine Quellen. Leipzig, 1880, 345–349.

At this time most of the central protagonists had died, with the exception of Theodoret and the Augusta Pulcheria. Her hand was still very much active in guiding the results of the subsequent synods. But even though Cyril's voice was hushed, it was his spirit which perhaps was still most in evidence even at the council in 451 and certainly at Constantinople II in 553.[223]

As soon as the funeral of Cyril was over, a purge was begun in Alexandria. Cyril's nephew, the priest Paul who was Econome of the church, was deposed from his rank and all the family connections were severed and uprooted as the archdeacon Dioscorus clawed back fiscal control of the treasury. A turbulent dynasty on the throne of Alexandria, begun by Theophilus sixty years before, was finally over. But power had passed to a man who had studied his master closely over the years and now tried to emulate him, without being possessed of all his qualities. Dioscorus was devoted to Cyril's theology which he identified as the sole standard of orthodoxy, though with much less personal ability and acumen than Cyril could command and, accordingly, with a narrower vision and less theological judgement. He regarded all Cyril's efforts of rapprochement with the Syrians as the misguided weakness of an old man who was sick at the time Paul of Emesa came to deal with him. He thus dismissed a significant part of Cyril's theology supposedly in the name of Cyril. Even worse, he was much less politically skilled than his mentor. He would soon bring the Alexandrian church into a ruinous decline from which it would never re-emerge as the great international christian power it had once been.

When the news of Cyril's death became known, some of his enemies wrote bitterly about him. One such letter which caustically asks the recipient to see that the largest stone possible was laid on his tomb so that he would never rise up again to trouble the church, was later attributed to Theodoret.[224] It caused such offence at the time in the general sentiment of the bishops that it was used against Theodoret

[223] See, for example, the balanced summation of P.T. Gray (1979) who, like Meyendorff, serves to lay the ghost of a very unneven reading favoured by previous English scholarship of the early decades of this century that sees Pope Leo's Tome as the most significant material presented at Chalcedon. Gray rightly brings out just how much Chalcedon was indebted to Cyril. The following council at Constantinople II (553) was even more so. The 1st Letter to Succensus in the present collection of translations shows Cyril at his most forward looking; it is almost a first draft of the Christological solution adopted in 451.

[224] Now Ep. 180 of Theodoret's corpus.

in his arraignment process at Chalcedon. There is a likelihood, however, that it was not originally written by him, and indeed his own general character as a man of discretion and charity would concur with this estimate. As Bright put it: 'If it were indeed the production of the pen of Theodoret, the reputation which would suffer from [such a coarse and ferocious invective] would assuredly be his own.'[225]

The proper estimate of Cyril's reputation was found in the massive international support that was given to his theology and his memory in the thick of theological conflicts over the following decades and centuries. Even at the time of his death, his reputation had achieved monumental status. The extent of his literary productions was staggering, and his enduring influence gave him a rank in importance for the subsequent history of christian theology among the giants of the patristic era, in the company of Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, and Augustine. He stands among all the patristic writers as the definitive exponent of oecumenical patristic christology, and soon gained the title (particularly in the eastern church where his reputation has always reigned supreme) of the 'Seal of all the Fathers' (sphragis ton pateron). Given his devotion to the principle of tradition in establishing the authentic mind of the church, it is a title which would have pleased him immensely.

[225] 'Cyril of Alexandria' in DCB, 1877. p. 772.